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THE INFLUENCE OF MACHIAVELLIANISM AND SELF-ESTEEM ON PIRATING INTENTION

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ABSTRACT

Digital piracy has become a major problem since the advancement of computer networking technologies. Pirates illegally download copyrighted content from the internet and share them with peers. This has brought down sales revenue of the production houses of movies, music, eBooks, Software, etc. Personality plays a major role in determining people's intention to pirate digital content. This study aimed to measure the impact of self-esteem and Machiavellianism on the pirating intention of individuals with pirating attitude as a mediating variable. An online survey was conducted using convenient sampling technique on 64 participants with 26 items in the 5-point Likert scale. Regression analysis of the data using SPSS revealed that Self-esteem negatively impacts pirating attitude, Machiavellianism positively impacts pirating attitude and pirating attitude positively impacts pirating intention. The results of the study indicated that individuals with high Machiavellianism and low self-esteem would participate in digital piracy. So, anti-piracy awareness campaigns should target people with high Machiavellianism and low self-esteem.

INTRODUCTION

Digital piracy is a form of online piracy and includes the unauthorized online distribution of electronic copies of copyrighted material such as software, movies, and music [1]. Though various innovative channels are created to ease the access to rent movies and music, it is projected that the global online TV and movie industry would lose 51.6 billion U.S. dollars to piracy in 2022 [2]. Illegal P2P (peer-to-peer) apps, streaming apps, stream ripping websites or even infringing websites in India or neighbouring countries, such as Bangladesh and Pakistan, result in losses of $250 million annually to the recorded music industry [3]. In addition to illegal downloads, online piracy is a huge challenge for over-the-top content providers, such as Netflix and Amazon Prime globally [4]. Online book piracy poses the same threat to legitimately produced and distributed books [5].

Piracy-fighting organizations (such as the MPAA, RIAA, and the BSA) have been trying to fight piracy in different ways [6]. India, the Copyright Act, 1957 protects all type of music, songs, and videos, literary and artistic work. The Stop Online Piracy Act (STOP) is also one such act that restricts access to sites that host pirated content [7]. Despite the existence of an enacted copyright statute in India, and also the nation's membership with numerous international property treaties and conventions, enforcement continues to be poor [8].

[9] investigated the factors that impact softlifting (piracy done by individuals for individual use). Majority of the pirates seem to involve in downloading copyrighted contents alone. The results of the study showed that personal and situational factors had an influence on the softlifting behavior [10]. [11] establishes a model called PCS (Personal Cultural Structural) model where personal factors have high impact on consumer decision making process. Of the various personal factors, personality is a factor variable that might influence the pirating attitude.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

Personality

Personality is a set of enduring individual differences in people's social, emotional, experiential, attitudinal, and motivational functioning styles that distinguish one whole person from another [12]. The responses must reflect positive or negative evaluations of the attitude object [13]. [14] differentiates personality into normal personality traits and negative personality traits. Thus, the above hypothesis can be proposed.

Normal personality traits

Self-esteem is defined as the positive or negative evaluations of the self, as in how we feel about it [15]. [16] has verified the significance of relationship between low self-esteem and delinquency (minor crime, especially that committed by young people). Since digital piracy is a crime, it can be proposed that low self-esteem could positively affect the attitude towards digital piracy.

H1: Self-esteem negatively affects Pirating attitude.

Negative personality traits

Machiavellianism is a psychological trait centered on interpersonal manipulation, unemotional coldness, and indifference to morality [17]. Machiavellianism is one of the three dark triads of personality [18]. [19] studied the influence of Machiavellianism on attitude towards digital piracy and concluded that Machiavellianism was partially supported as a positive predictor of attitude towards digital piracy.

H2: Machiavellianism positively affects Pirating attitude.

Attitude and intention

Attitude is a personal factor that refers to an individual's favourable or unfavourable evaluation regarding pirating any digital products [20]. Attitude is one of the major components of the theory of reasoned action [21] as well as its extension, the theory of planned behavior (TPB)[13]. The TPB points out that attitude is the major determinant of behavioural intention. Hence, in the piracy context, attitude of a person determines his/her participation in piracy. Attitude is majorly determined by the personality of a person [22]. Studies from [23] have shown the relationship between personality traits and the attitude to pirate.

H3: Pirating attitude positively affects Pirating intention.

Consolidating the above stated hypothesis, a conceptual model is formulated and given below in Fig 1.
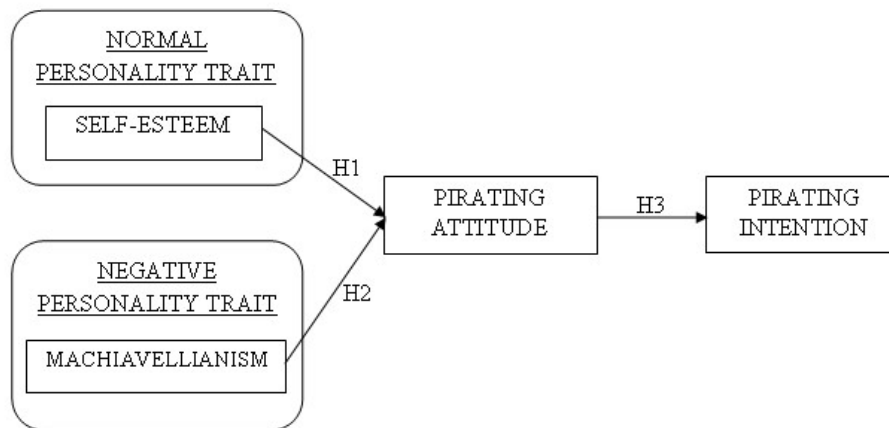

Fig. 1: Proposed Model

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METHODOLOGY

A questionnaire was used to collect data on the variables. The participants were selected using convenient sampling. Data was collected from 64 people through online survey. Self- esteem was measured using Rosenberg Self-esteem 10 item scale [25] and Machiavellianism was measured using The Short Dark Triad (SD3) 9 item scale [17]. The 4 items on Pirating attitude and 3 items on Pirating Intention were adopted from [20]. All the 26 items were measured using 5 point Likert scale.

Demography

The demographic summary for the respondents are tabulated below in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic details

Profile details		Count	Percentage
Gender	**Female**	30	46.88%
	Male	34	53.12%
Age	13-25	40	62.50%
	25-50	13	20.31%
	>50	11	17.19%

Majority of the respondents were male in age group 13-25 years.

Descriptive statistics and Reliability

The descriptive statistics and reliability details are given in Table 2.

The value of standard deviation varies from 0.55 to 1.28. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for over all reliability of the instrument was found to be .78, depicting that it is statistically significant as it is above the acceptance level of 0.6.

Table 2: Pirating attitude versus Pirating intention

Variables	Standard Beta	t-value
Pirating attitude	0.39	3.34
R^2	0.15	
Adjusted R^2	0.14	
Dependent Variable: Pirating intention		

The results indicate that independent variable Pirating attitude was explaining 14% of variance in the dependent variable, Pirating intention. Model having Pirating attitude as independent variable and Pirating intention as dependent variable was having a good statistical fit as indicated by the F test value of 11.13 ($p < 0.05$). Pirating attitude was having a positive impact on Pirating intention as indicated by the beta value of 0.39 ($p < 0.05$).

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Findings

It was found that Self-esteem negatively affects Pirating attitude and Machiavellianism positively affects Pirating attitude. Out of the two independent variables Self-esteem was having a higher impact on Pirating attitude. It was also found that Pirating attitude positively affects Pirating intention. Hence, the proposed hypotheses were found to be true.

Implications

Self-esteem and Pirating attitude had inverse relationship, i.e., people with low self-esteem would participate in digital piracy. Since there was a direct relationship between Machiavellianism and Pirating attitude, people with high Machiavellianism would indulge in digital piracy. Also, it was found that Pirating attitude would lead to Pirating intention. The variance levels were low.

Limitations

- This study focused on pirating digital materials as a whole.
- The sample size was only 64 and the people who participated in the survey belong to Tamil Nadu only.

Area of future research

- Future research could focus on measuring the impact of these variables regarding specific digital material like movies, music, software or eBooks.
- Other personality traits could be included along with the proposed model
- This study could be replicated with more number of samples for a large population.

CONCLUSION

As the size of digital contents is increasing consistently, more challenges arise. This study could be used for identifying the segment of population which needs awareness of the harmful effects of digital piracy. The results of this study could help digital content producers to choosing their target customers while planning their advertising and promotional strategies.

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