

## ANALYZING THE PARENTS' PERSPECTIVE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON THEIR CHILDREN'S COGNITIVE HEALTH

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### Abstract

The most influential technology of today is social media. The term "social media" is used frequently these days, particularly among young people. Since the internet is a relatively new phenomenon, people are becoming increasingly familiar with it and understanding how it operates. It has changed how we communicate with each other and with the world. This study examines parents' perspectives on the health effects of digital media on children. The relationship between parents and children serves as the groundwork for understanding these family dynamics. We anticipate connections among different factors and the challenges faced during parental mediation. When individuals rely on social networks to create a sense of virtual connections and superficial friendships, it can lead to mental and emotional health issues. Additionally, online media can be highly addictive, consuming time and energy that could be spent with loved ones, family, and friends. This addiction can weaken interpersonal skills and result in isolated behaviors.

### INTRODUCTION

Due to their growing popularity, versatility, and diverse features, social media platforms have become an integral part of youngsters' daily routines. These platforms can completely change social norms, perspectives, and behavior, as they have developed into an expansion of friendship groups. Significant advancements that focus on user-generated content and social connections are often linked to online recreational activities (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). One prominent example is social media, which has fostered the creation of online communities (Lu and Hsiao, 2010). Key characteristics of online communities are typically explained through network functions, such as the directional nature of communications (Kent, 2010) or to illustrate

different modes of conversation (Howard and Parks, 2012).

According to statistics, there are over 5.56 billion internet users worldwide (Statista, 2025). People contact and collaborate on different social platforms, benefiting both themselves and society as a whole (Meshi, Tamir, and Heekeren, 2015). According to Boyd (2014), individuals use social media for various purposes, including socializing, career advancement, staying informed about current events, and maintaining friendships and family ties. Studies demonstrate that kids and teenagers who regularly utilize digital platforms experience benefits, such as improved communication, enhanced peer relationships, and greater technical expertise. People

now have access to online platforms like Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and Myspace, enabling them to interact with each other online (Gruzd, 2018).

These social platforms provide numerous opportunities for users to connect with friends, former classmates, and others who have common interests. Almost 1.4 billion individuals worldwide use Facebook, making it one of the biggest and most widely used platforms for socializing. This vast network allows us to understand, acquire, and share knowledge instantly, creating a sense of global community. Developments in information dissemination and correspondence, including streaming media, have become essential to the academic, cultural, and public lives of youth worldwide, regardless of income levels (Allen et al., 2014). While social media may open up new channels for communication and social interaction, there are concerns regarding youth internet usage (Baker and Moore, 2008).

People browse these interactions commonly to spend considerable amounts of time (O'Donnell, 2023), engaging with their schoolmates and peers (Gálvez-Rodríguez et al., 2018). Advancements in internet systems in recent years have introduced new methods for businesses, and have benefits from these online platforms in many ways, such as recommended marketing (Chen, 2011), greater awareness of the brand (De Vries, Gensler, and Leeflang, 2012), higher profits (Agnihotri, et al., 2012), exchange of knowledge in a business setting (Lu and Hsiao, 2010), and the opportunity to build connections with clients (Ali, and Ahmad, 2011).

#### **Parent-child relationship regarding internet addiction**

Family ties play an important role in the development of children, particularly in the relationship between parents and adolescents. Experts agree that being a mother is more important in the early years, especially in nurturing children and giving them full and focused attention. According to Cacioppo et al. (2009), as children move into middle childhood and adolescence, fathers play a role in character development, which is vital for adolescent emotional and cognitive growth. Mothers are often the most significant caregivers, and fathers frequently act as the favorite supporter

(Lamb, 1978; Lytton, 1982). Sustainable contentment occurs when individuals possess the cognitive, interpersonal, and physical skills required to overcome specific mental, social, or physiological barriers (Savolainen, 2015).

Social norms also change parents' perspectives regarding online media. The structure of parent-child attachment relationships changes significantly as children develop, particularly during the first few years of life (Stayton and Ainsworth, 1973). This phase is critical as kids begin to seek close, supportive connections that extend beyond the family. Children's early attachment behaviors undergo several significant developmental changes (Cole et al., 1996). Family dynamics and parenting styles significantly influence teenagers' online behavior. The internet mediation style of the parents varies as their children grow (Helsper et al., 2013). Initially, they adopt authoritarian styles, but over time show leniency (Dedkova and Smahel, 2020; Tur-Porcar, 2017; Valcke et al., 2010). Thus, the relationship between parents and children is not simply one-sided or mutually beneficial; it tends to be qualitatively consistent (Bates, Maslin, and Frankel, 1985). Understanding this relationship reflects how often, deeply, and tenderly parents communicate with each other and their children, which is essential for both parents. Adolescents who experience high levels of conflict or dysfunction in their families, whether stemming from their fathers or mothers, are more likely to engage in harmful online activities (Cacioppo et al., 2009). However, Kids and adolescents are vulnerable to peer pressure and have little capacity to regulate their behavior when navigating and exploring digital platforms.

In today's digital age, young children and teenagers might be at risk of internet addiction. Innovative devices, such as smartphones and computers, can be seen as psychotechnology, since they impact the young age brain. According to Munno et al. (2017), this characteristic can exacerbate issues for individuals with psychotic traits like depression and anxiety, leading to addiction. These conditions can cause adolescents to lose self-confidence and disrupt their family environment. Access to the web can also affect attachment between parents and their children. Research by Esen and Gündoğdu (2010) indicates that adolescents are more susceptible to

internet addiction due to their vulnerability to harmful online content. The negative effects of excessive internet use among teens include boredom, social ineptitude, a compulsion for personal gratification, increased feelings of depression (Davila, 2012; Padilla-Walker et al., 2012), with a decline in in-person interactions and an increase in feelings of loneliness, anxiety, despair, and sleep deprivation (Kraut et al., 1998). A peculiar phenomenon identified by some researchers is known as digital melancholy (Frankel, 2013). This refers to feelings of sadness that arise when individuals devote excessive free time to social networking platforms, develop normal symptoms of grief. Additionally, Christakis and Moreno (2009) found that 90% of teenagers use social media throughout the day and night, causing 37% of them to struggle with sleep (Espinoza and Juvonen, 2011). Thus, it appears that digital dependency and insufficient sleep are real conditions that many people face. This current study's conceptual model proposed connections among psychological well-being constructs, emotional intelligence, and social isolation.

### **Problems with Psychological wellness and digital media**

Using social networks is an emerging means for teens to monitor their psychological state. Maintaining relationships is important for our emotional well-being, as highlighted by the Psychological Health Foundation. Nonetheless, research into the potential roles that adolescent bonds with strangers outside the family has recently begun to take place (Armsden and Greenberg, 1987). Our interactions with others affect our overall well-being, mental health, and even our longevity, as demonstrated by Umberson and Montez (2010). A connection with others is essential for maintaining mental wellness. However, psychologists are unable to arrive at a consensus on which specific characteristics of interpersonal interactions influence an individual's psychological state. Research shows that individuals who survived traumatic events often experience fewer psychological disorders because of the improved interpersonal support they receive, which helps stress-reduction activity (Maulik et al., 2011).

This is important in the context of cyberbullying, as Cassidy et al. (2012) reported that parents are

generally less aware of their children's online activities compared to the children themselves, and that youth report experiencing higher rates of cyberbullying than parents acknowledge (Helfrich et al., 2020). In addition, cyberbullying differs from traditional bullying (Watteau, 2025), in that it affects families as well as schools. Offrey and Rinaldi (2017) emphasize that healthy communication between parents and children is essential for reducing issues related to online harassment and intimidation in secondary school. Cyberbullying, which involves using digital media to post harmful comments, images, and reports to hurt other people, remains an enduring issue (Brown and Marin, 2009; Patchin and Hinjuja, 2006). The research by Buelga, Martínez-Ferrer, and Cava (2017) highlights a clear association between online harassment and significant family challenges. They found that victims of online harassment often avoided talking to their fathers and had barely any conversations with their mothers. Similarly, Matsunaga (2009) found that communication patterns can predict bullying in person. As a result, when parents intentionally maintain an open line of communication with their children, they not only assist them in resolving conflicts arising from bullying but also prevent it from occurring in its early stages (Helfrich et al., 2020).

Social anxiety can further complicate the impact of social isolation on the sharing of personal data via social media. Despite being aware of potential threats, participants are convinced that their collective data is not going to be misused. This tendency exposes young people to sharing personal information at an unusually high rate, which can result in negative consequences, such as feelings of loneliness (Oberst et al., 2017). People are affected by their internet entertainment and often feel detached and alienated from their social communities (Vinales and Thomas, 2021). These negative feelings, specifically alienation and social anxiety, motivate teenagers to release more personal data online in an attempt to feel accepted by society (Gross et al., 2002; Shepherd and Edelman, 2005). A social anxiety surrounding online communities has developed due to the extensive attention given to the bad attributes of the World Wide Web, despite the potential gains that social networks can provide

(Ahn, 2012). A deficiency of interpersonal connections or exclusion from social communities is a manifestation of social estrangement (Choi and Noh, 2020). In the opinion of Bruhn (2011), individuals facing social estrangement are deprived of community connections and demand interaction with different people or engaging in congenial tasks. This social anxiety, portrayed by the fear of making certain choices, may reflect a fragile state in interpersonal relationships, highlighting concerns about how others perceive or judge them. When kids perceive that they're rejected or marginalized, they are more likely to share confidential data on online platforms and may struggle with social phobia (Gentina and Chen, 2019; Caplan, 2006; Erwin et al., 2004). Social phobia is a feeling of anxiousness that comes with the thought or anticipation of social criticism in real or hypothetical interpersonal situations. In scenarios with severe anxiety about social interaction, individuals expect to receive unfavorable reviews from others. This study indicates that social anxiety stems from fears of inadequacy and critique, such as being scolded or attending regular social gatherings, like visiting somebody for the very first time (Schlenker and Leary, 1982).

### Discussion

According to Hawkey and Cacioppo (2010), toxic isolation is associated with a higher likelihood of aging prematurely. Taylor's tend and befriend theory (2006) suggests that when individuals experience stress, they join others for protection and comfort. This response is triggered by the body's physiological changes that cause a need for social affiliation when it perceives a social threat like isolation. Positive social interactions help to reduce the body's stress responses and restore balance. Gallop conducted a recent survey and found that 67% of youngsters believe in companies that collect or maintain their confidential information, compared to 56% of older generations (Fleming and Adkins, 2016).

The rapid growth of modern communication technologies in home environments has drastically changed how parents and kids engage in their daily lives and share information (Livingstone et al., 2011). Parents play a very important role in determining their children's digital behaviors. Multiple studies suggest that children's learning

experiences, activities, and interpersonal development are determined by this pathway. Warren (2001) interpreted this influence as any method parents use to regulate, manage, or explain entertainment materials for children, encompassing all methods parents use to supervise, monitor, or evaluate media activities for their kids.

Concerned parents often prefer to rely on discussions at meetings with other parents and educators or recommendations from friends and family rather than exploring websites containing details about online safety. A study conducted in the Netherlands involving childcare specialists confirmed that many parents struggle to engage effectively with their children's media usage (Duimel and Meijering, 2013). The younger parents tend to enforce internet restrictions, likely due to their greater familiarity with it. Whereas older parents generally impose fewer restrictions and have less internet knowledge. As a child's age plays an important role when it comes to internet restrictions, because it is anticipated that children will become more responsible with age; therefore, younger children typically have more restrictions than older ones (Valcke et al., 2010).

Parents frequently use a wider range of restrictive methods on their younger children, such as limiting website access and online time (Lee, 2013). Personality and self-esteem are significant predictors of both time spent on social media and addictive tendencies; however, these factors do not account for much of the variance observed. This suggests that other factors affecting young adults' use of social networking sites require further investigation. Our youth are likely affected by this shift in society with the frequent use of social media. Electronic entertainment certainly has negative personal consequences, causing adolescents to react adversely and analyze their anxieties and self-perception. While there are social advantages for youngsters engaging with virtual entertainment, there is evidence that it can help alleviate symptoms of depression. Many of these challenges stem from kids being exposed to external factors, the lack of knowledge regarding privacy concerns, and exposure to unattended and uncontrolled content (Mondal et al., 2016).

### Conclusion

We often provide youngsters with access to an unprecedented amount of data without sufficient guidance or preparation. According to Dyer (2018), family members significantly influence how their kids use online platforms, and most adolescents do seek help from their families. However, children may hesitate to ask their parents or other adults for advice if they feel they lack technical knowledge (Hofer and Moore, 2011).

The ability to share personal information online presents various advantages for both parents and children. These benefits include access to social support, the opportunity to portray their families in the way they prefer, and receiving positive feedback in the form of comments and shares. Research suggests that close peers are the most influential social connections, serving as important role models for behavior, especially among teenagers (Kağitçibaşı, 2007).

Families believe that online socializing could improve their children's academic performance; however, more than half of the parents feel that social media does not improve the children's school success, while they waste time on social media and do not use it for educational purposes (Sahin, 2021). Parents often struggle with limited communication with their children, particularly when they are in their teens and still developing their communication skills. For parents, girls are raised to be more guarded and controlled compared to boys. This serious concern among parents highlights the importance of finding a balanced and organized approach to ensure that children's growth and development are optimized.

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