

Social Media Usage and Parent Child Relation: An Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The use of social media has become a necessary daily activity and this modern medium of communication is almost difficult to ignore as it has become a valuable tool which vastly impacts our ability to form relationships, sharing our ideas and thoughts through building virtual networks and communities locally and worldwide. The usage of Social media has many benefits for socialization and support, however the objective of this study is to understand how the social media usage relates to a parent child relation, the ability to bond and spend time with their children. This study utilized an online surveying of parent (either father or mother) having a child aged between 3 to 10 years of age using Google form through various social media sites and online parenting communities. Respondents were asked a variety of questions regarding their demographic characteristics, usage of social media, parent child relation. The collected information was analyzed using correlation and results revealed that social media play a significant agent in the parent child relationship. The study brings the necessity of psychological assistance needed to the parents of child whose age between 3 to 10 years.

Keywords: *Parent Child Relation, Social Media Usage*

In today's technological world, the practice of using social media has become an essential everyday activity. Social media can be referred to as any internet communication tool including websites and applications that allows users to broadly share content quickly and efficiently by making them engage with the friends, relatives and the society. Social media usage refers to online behaviors that facilitate direct exchanges among users (Verduyn, 2017). Social media is not only used for social interaction and entertainment, it also helps to access news and various information from different parts of the world at the fingertips. It has become a valuable communication tool which vastly impacts our ability to form relationships, sharing our ideas and thoughts through building virtual networks and communities locally and worldwide. Now days the use of social media has become the modern medium of communication and is almost difficult to ignore. Many websites or applications such as WhatsApp, Telegram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, SnapChat, Instagram etc. are becoming a part the daily life for a larger society, indicating that social media has become an integral part of our life style, our work culture and even parenting.

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Received: June 21, 2023; Revision Received: August 22, 2023; Accepted: August 24, 2023

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Through these applications and websites one can share information anywhere and anytime to anybody in the world and allows people to connect across the globe instantly.

But the use of social media can be constructive or destructive, and it solely depends on how it's used. It is not easy to sort out whether the use of social media is positive or negative. The existing literature suggests many positive roles of social media like reducing the physical distances by the people who are separated by thousands of miles, who can still feel close to each other. Social media gives a snapshot of a person's personality by displaying his/her likes, dislikes, social circle, opinions, views, and habits, which may help in developing relationships with people who share similar interests. Social media also helps to stay in touch always, keeps the memories of amazing family moments. Pictures, videos, tags, check-ins, etc. show up every year on the anniversary of the event. Of course, it also gives educational benefits and social justice initiatives (O'Keeffe & Clark-Pearson, 2011). On the other hand, social media can also lead to addiction, sleep deprivation, eye-sight issues, dissatisfaction, discontent, jealousy, and other negative emotions are linked with it. Furthermore, there has been evidence to suggest there is a link between using the internet and depression and social anxiety (Selfhout et al., 2009).

It has many benefits for socialization and support, but at times, there is a sense of disconnection with the people around. It fails to deliver personal touch and take away typical face-to-face human interactions. People have only fewer interactions with the people that they associate with especially in the case of new parents.

Compared to others, new parents are frequently dependent on the use of social media to communicate and share their child's beautiful timeline, and every successful milestone, cute moments completely with pictures with their friends and family members and count for the reactions with likes and comments. Some parents may find value in social media as a general information resource and as a parenting tool or to get tips. But when a large share of social media usage occurs, it may relate to a parent's ability to bond and spend time with their children. A conflict may occur for such parents between the amount of time needed to care for their children and the amount of time they want to devote to their needs, emotions, entertainment and socialization.

According to Bowlby (1980), the attachment relationship begins in infancy and it affects throughout the developmental stages, behaviors in other relationships, risk-taking, and mental health. Huisman (2014) stated that attachment often formed through eye contact, talking to each other, and skin-to-skin contact. So often a good parent-child relationship is formed by these high levels of bonding of children with their parents (especially mothers), through the strong emotional and physical ties, frequent conversations and the presence between a child and his or her parents. The loss of the attachment figure in early childhood is often accompanied by anxiety and grief, which can lead to problems in the child's social and emotional development (Varga, 2011). For a better mental health of an adult a strong attachment ties between child and their parents should be established in their childhood itself (Bowlby, 1973). Attachment of an infant to a parent is believed to be developed through consistent responsiveness by a parent to the child's needs which results in good internal working models of attachment and caring relationships, these models are a necessary condition for good mental health of the future adult (Boutelle, 2009). The main theory guiding this research study is attachment theory, which states that, initially formed attachment orientations are sustained over time and extended to a period of interpersonal relationships. The insecurities identified as consisting of attachment avoidance and anxiety,

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shape such social-cognitive mechanisms as interpersonal goal formation and planning which subsequently shape interpersonal communication (Bretherton,1992).

Children learn both cognitively and emotionally through the consistent relationships and face to face interactions, conversations with their parents. But when parents begin to spend more time on social media children may start to lose some of the important interactions that are essential for a healthy attachment. A recent study showed an association between maternal problematic use of electronic media and interruptions of parent–child interactions, which, in turn, were associated with more behavioral difficulties in 1- to 5-year-old children (McDaniel, & Radesky, 2018). In the current pandemic condition, situation worsen that parents personal responsibilities increased, almost all parents are more involved on their phones with work from home and spending more time on technology than with children or partners. They may be physically present, but there may be less of a focus on the necessary eye contact and communication needed to acquire a healthy attachment at a young age. A study conducted by Sampasa-Kanyinga, Goldfield, Kingsbury, Clayborne, and Colman (2019) reported that the heavy use of social media is associated with negative parent–child relationships. Turkle (2012) states that computers have ‘taken over’ us and it seems to be although we are connected, we are ‘alone together’.

Parenting is not a simple task and it requires lot of time and effort, but now a days, whenever people get any spare time, they will get engaged in social media, as social media is fast evolving, everything comes under our fingertip. Shopping from different parts of the world, accessing news from anywhere, getting tips and advices about anything and for entertainments also people depend on social media. Parents may be using these resources of social support and bonding, also to improve their parenting ability, improving their own moods and the behaviors of their children. Parents may wish to use mobile devices for a few seconds at a time, but may get absorbed for hours. Present study gives an insight on how the parent child relationship is affected by social media usage and what factors are affecting the relationship negatively. The paper is an insight to build a healthy relationship with their parents, as only the children who have a secure and positive relationship with their parents learn essential skills and values that set them on the path for future success. Implications of othr demographic characteristics with the variables are also further explored.

Research Question

- What effect does social media have on todays parenthood?
- How does the social media usage of parents related with their children?

Objective

- To find out the relationship of social media usage of parent on their relation with the child.

Hypothesis

- There will be no significant relationship exist between social media use and parent child relation.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The participants of the study consist of 65 parents (either father or mother) having a child aged between 3 to 10 years of age from various parts of Kerala state. Demographics taken

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for the children of the parents surveyed the sex of the child and it was found that 43% of children being male, 59 % female.

Instruments

Social Media Usage Index: A self-report survey questionnaire was developed by the researchers, based on a review of literature relevant to the problem and by reviewing previous studies on social media use and social media usage pattern of an individual. There are 10 structured statements with three-point anchors, which gives an overall media usage of the person. The sum totals all the statements gives index of media usage of a person.

Child-Parent Relationship Scale (CPRS): The CPRS was developed by Pianta (1992) to understand the nature of parent-child relationships. The CPRS is a self-report instrument completed by parent to assess their perceptions of their relationship with their child. It consists of 30 items with a 5-point Likert scale. The items in the CPRS are answered from (1) completely inconvenient to (5) certainly very convenient. Reliability of the scale, the internal consistency coefficient (Cronbach alpha) related to the sub-dimensions of the scale have been found to be 0.85 for conflictive relationships, 0.73 for positive relationships, and 0.73 for the overall scale. Cronbach alpha values for the sub-dimensions have been analyzed to determine the internal consistency of the CPRS and the alpha values have been found as 0.71 for conflicting relationships and 0.74 for positive relationships.

Procedure

The research methods used included online surveying of parent (either father or mother) having a child aged between 3 to 10 years of age. Data was collected using Google form. Researcher collected the mail id of parents who spend time on these same social media sites and having a child with proposed age group through various social media sites and online parenting communities. Through these methods of sampling the study was able to acquire a great variety of participants from different areas, of all ethnicities, ages, and occupation. About 150 mail ids were collected and the Google forms were send through emails. After completing the consent respondents were asked to complete demographic details like usage of social media, parent child relation. There were 65 participants responded to the instruments and submitted their responses. The instruments were scored according to the scoring scheme prepared by the concerned individuals and entered in to a spread sheet for further statistical analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There are several relevant data found within the study. Firstly, for social media usage, the most widely-used form of social media was found to be 'Whatsapp', since 100% of the participants have account in this app and 89% is active on this application. Next commonly used application was found to be 'Facebook' as 83% respondents have account in this 76% is active on it. Next widely used application was 'Instagram' (60%), telegram (45%) and you tube (47%).

Among the participants, 99% of the respondents found social media to be extremely useful and 98% found their smartphone to be important. Among the respondents 82% use it to keep in touch with the friends, 63% for reading news and to access other news, 60% use for educational purpose. The social media was commonly used for shopping and entertainments. Despite these high numbers of usage within the sample, only 19% of the respondents strongly believe their social media usage has directly affected the child negatively and 15%

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reported that social media may affect their relation with their child and 66% believed social media usage have not affected their relation with their child.

Use of social media has been increasing rapidly, and the present study focus to find out relationship of social media usage with parent child bonding. Here the investigators collected information regarding parents social media usage and their parent child relationship. To verify the hypothesis, Pearson product moment correlation was calculated and the results are presented in the table 1.

Table 1 Correlation between social media usage of parents and parent child relation

Variables	Social media usage	Conflict	Closeness	Dependence
Social media usage	-			
Conflict	0.067	-		
Closeness	-0.486**	-0.455	-	
Dependence	0.212	0.455	0.564	-

** $p < .01$

Table 1 gives the results of correlation between parent's social media usage and their parent child relationship. And it was found that there is a significant negative relationship ($r = -0.486$, $p < .01$) exist between parent's social media usage and their parent child relationship-Closeness. This indicates that as there is an increase in the duration of social media usage by parents there is a decrease in extends of closeness felt between parent and child. Results shows that, when the parent's attention is focused elsewhere on their mobile devices and social media sites children may be feeling emotionally distant, ignoring needs of their children (not all but some of the needs of their children, which they consider as important). In some instances, parent may be physically as being present but children may not feel their presence as they may not be involving in their small games and fun. However, these conditions may lead to a disintegration of the secure base of the attachment relationship. Those parents who use social media may not be knowingly neglectful, but instead that their attentions become divided and diverted which may replace or diminish the valuable quality time between parents and their children. The results received from other studies also reasonably support the hypothesis. Turner (2011), states that using social media excessively, the supervision or attention given by a parent can be haphazard or inconsistent, which can lead to a disintegration of the secure base of the attachment relationship. Golden (2015) have also found that children who have experienced distraction by their parents or those who get less attention, may not be likely available to share their needs and desires with their parents, hence affecting the nature of their attachment. Park, Kee and Valenzuela (2009) also states that spending quality of time with the child improve their parenting ability, improving their own moods, relationship and the behaviors of their children.

In contrast to the findings Chairatchatakul (2012) found that parental involvement in school activities of their children by usage of social media has a positive effect on the child and can improve the overall relationship between parent and child.

Bowlby (2005) also suggest that, for a child to be able to explore his world with confidence and closeness with parents he must be able to trust in the availability and security of their primary caretaker which may develop from their childhood itself.

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As an implication of the present study, when a good parent child relation formed based on being in the moment, spending quality time, helps the child to feel secure and close relation with their parents. This may build confidence and reflects in their future development reducing the risk of behavioural problems among children.

Present study throws to the light of the fact that there is a need to be wider awareness of the use of social media and its impacts on children. Highlighting these can help parents, caregivers, service providers, educators, policymakers and other adults to better identify and respond to children need and to understand the fact that social media usage is replacing or diminishing valuable quality time between them which are necessary for a healthy development.

CONCLUSION

The study showed statistically significant negative correlation between social media usage and parent child relation and there were no significant correlations found between the other variables, indicating that the parents who use social media excessively may be more likely to be distracted in their everyday parenting and their children may not feel closeness with the parents therefore less likely to have developed a strong attachment to their children. Children always need loving, secure and exciting environment around them for their optimum growth and development, for this to happen, their physical, developmental, and emotional and psychosocial needs have to be addressed on the right time. Only when the child gets attention and understanding along with love and care, creates strong relationships between parents and children. When the parents are spending excessive time on social media, they may lose a quality of time the child expect from them. Present study highly suggests to talk and engage in a face-to-face conversation then and there with the child. Only when the parents engage in frequent talking, playing and interacting with them, brings close, secure and strong parent child relation. Further studies should be conducted to understand the extend of influence of strong parent child relation in building foundation for child's personality, brain development, talents, mental and physical abilities etc.

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Acknowledgement

The author appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

How to cite this article: Amritharaj, K. & Manikandan, K. (2023). Social Media Usage and Parent Child Relation: An Analysis. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 11(3), 2647-2653. DIP:18.01.251.20231103, DOI:10.25215/1103.251