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Research Paper

Navigating the Digital Nurturing: Challenges and Opportunities for Child Development in Indian Context

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ABSTRACT

Digitalization has revolutionized the individuals, businesses, governments, societies and economies to the great extent. Smartphone technology, 5G network, affordable data plans, digital infrastructure created favourable conditions for internet users in India. There were 954 million internet subscribers in March 2024 in India (PIB, Govt. of India, 2024). The rapid proliferation of digital technology has reshaped parenting practices globally, with significant implications for child development. In the Indian context, where cultural norms and values intertwine with modern technology, the concept of "digital nurturing" presents both challenges and opportunities. This study aims to analyze the role of digital parenting in shaping cognitive, emotional, and social development among Indian children. The study is empirical in nature. The author has administered the structured questionnaire through five-point Likert scale to collect primary data for the parents as the target respondents from Chandigarh. The sample random sampling technique was used to justify the equal representation of target population. The survey method used for 178 sample size. The descriptive analysis and inferential statistics (Chi-squre/ T-Tests) considered for the study. The findings revealed that unlimited information, excessive screen time, high content consumption, digital stress pose major risks while digital literacy, learning new skills can benefit children. The study advocates parental guidance, policy interventions, regulatory frameworks, content moderation to promote psychological and social well-being of children.

Keywords: *Digital Parenting, Nurturing, Child Development, Screen Time, Child Psychology, Cognitive and Emotional Growth, Digital Stress*

Small kids' initial learning and improvement are extraordinarily supported by the inescapability of computerized devices in their day-to-day routine (Cao and Li, 2023). Nonetheless, there is banter in regards with the impacts of early computerized openness on cerebrum and social turn of events, which has ignited interest in research (Browne et al., 2020) as well as open worries. Concerning impact on executive function (EF), an assortment of mental cycles that work with objective arranged conduct and versatile responses to new circumstances, the accessible exploration has uncovered clashing and at times disconnected results (Bustamante et al., 2023). While some (McHarg et al., 2020) found that detached screen time (like staring at the television) could diminish EF, others (Li et al., 2023) suggested that dynamic screen time, (for example, using intelligent applications) could

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further develop it. Furthermore, Bustamante et al. (2023) detailed no critical outcomes with respect to its effect on EF in their new meta-examination of the social proof that is presently accessible, which goes against episodic proof and presence of mind. Together, these clashing outcomes have shown a huge exploration hole: most of past examination focused on EF utilizing social techniques, without giving neuroimaging proof of its impacts on mind construction and capability. As per a 2022 survey directed by the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI), 70% of Indian guardians voiced worries about issues including cyberbullying and online enslavement, despite the fact that just 35% of them routinely managed their children's internet-based conduct (IAMAI, 2022). This demonstrates that Indian guardians should be more aware of web wellbeing. Parents should monitor and control the use of smartphones. Otherwise, it may lead to digital stress disturbing the mental and physical health (Gaikwad, 2024).

Children's Social Emotional Relationships with Digital Parenting

It is currently emphatically encouraged to utilize a nurturing approach that consolidates warmth, checking, and open correspondence among guardians and youngsters, as innovation has changed kid raising to only lenient, tyrant, majority rule, or careless techniques. Digital nurturing is one method for executing these three nurturing styles (Chaarani et al., 2022). The objective of digital nurturing is to give kids clear rules and oversight in regards to what should and can't be possible on digital gadgets, as well as the job that the two guardians and children ought to play in such manner. Digital nurturing isn't just about prohibiting kids from utilizing devices; it's likewise about ensuring kids don't become dependent on them or use them for broadened timeframes. Youth improvement and development might be hurt by this. Regarding digital nurturing, coming up next are the things guardians need to accomplish for their children (Dong et al., 2020):

a. Raise parental mindfulness: Digital nurturing can be testing in the event that guardians don't have the foggiest idea what a blog is or how to use Facebook, YouTube, TikTok, Twitter, or different sites that kids much of the time access. In this manner, invest some energy finding out about these sites.

b. Clearly guide the usage of media and digital technologies: It is desirable over use superb correspondence to pick when and how lengthy kids can utilize digital devices assuming they are now acquainted with them. Parental and kid arrangement is vital for the use of digital devices (Hutton et al., 2022).

c. Strike a balance between digital and in-person encounters: For kids to keep communicating with their environmental factors, it is significant that guardians make this move (Ding & Li, 2023). For example, by consolidating true encounters like games, outside diversion, creative undertakings, intuitive perusing, associating with companions, playing exemplary games, etc.

Objectives of the study

- To analysis the effect of digital parenting on children's cognitive, emotional, and social development in India.
- To identify the challenges and risks of digital technology in child development, such as excessive screen time, digital stress, and information overload.

Hypothesis of the study

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant relationship between digital parenting practices and children's cognitive development in India.

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant difference in the emotional well-being of children based on the level of digital parenting.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Arya et al. (2024) featured the essential job ladies, specifically moms, play as guides in directing their children's utilization of digital machines in an exceptionally organized world. In that review with 1,000 homemakers from the Kochi Company region, they underscore the need to enable ladies through digital proficiency. The creators recognized the basic parts of digital capability by applying a changed rendition of the DigCompEdu worldview, which incorporate advancing better consciousness of digital innovations and their ramifications for kid development. Discriminant examination showed impressive contrasts in moms' degrees of digital ability, setting them into four classifications: beginner, fundamental, autonomous, and capable clients. The review reasons that adjusting digital proficiency projects to oblige moms' various degrees of ability will likely permit moms to help and lead their children's digital support with more achievement. Also, notwithstanding sociodemographic components, these projects were viewed as urgent as they would make digital education intercessions significant and successful across different gatherings of networks.

Swargiary (2024) researched the cognitive, social, and emotional development among Age Alpha children by inspecting the impact of digital learning conditions. The review broke down understudies matured between 7 to 12 presented to digital learning settings against different understudies who participated in customary approaches to learning. Subjects were surveyed across a half year through state sanctioned tests as well as conduct perceptions. The children in the digital gathering performed fundamentally better compared to their partners in the customary learning bunch concerning appreciation ($M = 81.62\%$, $SD = 2.94$) and critical thinking abilities ($M = 4.34$, $SD = 0.16$). Shockingly, while most expected that digitization would think twice about abilities, the digital students showed top notch social connections. Nonetheless, the active work level was a lot of lower in the digital gathering contrasted and the conventional gathering, $M = 3.20$, $SD = 0.08$. Emotional reactions likewise shifted relying upon the kind of digital commitment, and hence, game-based learning and innovative exercises created the most ideal results. These discoveries showed that digital learning conditions could essentially upgrade cognitive and interactive abilities, however they ought to be coordinated with customary learning strategies to guarantee adjusted, comprehensive development, particularly regarding active work.

Movahed and Zeinalizadeh (2024) presented a correlational report to explore the impact of parenting styles and web compulsion on the social well-being of secondary school understudies in Tehran. The Youthful Parenting Stock, the Web Fixation Test, and the Social Well-Being Scale were directed to an example of 150 children. The investigation discovered that certain parenting styles, including emotional hardship, emotional limitation, abandonment, and doubt, adversely impacted the social well-being of the understudies. Web fixation was likewise found to have a significant adverse consequence. Numerous relapse examination showed that these qualities represented 59% of the difference in understudies' social well-being. The outcomes featured the requirement for positive parenting approaches and the need to address web dependence on encourage higher social well-being among youths.

Akaroğlu (2024) concentrated on whether parental perspectives could be related with social-emotional well-being or digital game compulsion among Turkish children. This work

included 227 children between ages 6 to 13; it was figured out that authoritarianist parental perspectives and typical web use, as a matter of fact were solid indicators for digital gaming-enslavement propensities and orientation as well as errand orientedness demonstrated solid indicators for habit-forming inclinations. The review presumed that these attributes made sense of 52.8% of the difference in digital gaming dependence propensities. The review brought up the gigantic impact of digital gaming fixation on children's mental well-being and the urgent job guardians play in restricting their children's screen time and building a sound association with innovation.

Manap (2024) investigated the impact of digital parenting mindfulness on children's feeling guideline abilities, zeroing in on what guardians' consciousness of digital media means for their children's emotional development. The example comprised of 203 guardians of grade younger students, with 66% females and 34% guys, with a typical period of 38.37 years. Information were gathered through the "Digital Parenting Awareness Scale" and the "Scale of Emotion Regulation in Children-Adult Form." Engaging measurements, relationship, and relapse examination were led to dissect the information. Results showed that few elements of digital parenting mindfulness, like pessimistic displaying, digital disregard, proficient use, and assurance from digital dangers, were firmly connected with children's emotional force and guideline. Relapse investigations discovered that pessimistic demonstrating and disregard were more prominent and proficient use and insurance lesser for children who experienced pessimistic emotional development. In this review, it was seen that the guardians need to know the best methodology of digital parenting that assists children with accomplishing solid emotional development and lower emotional power. It centers around the requirement for guardians to be proactive in controlling digital media openness to advance better emotional control in their children.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

An **empirical research approach** has been utilized in this review to look at what digital parenting means for the social, emotional, and cognitive development of children in India. The review approach is in this manner put in a position to gather, look at, and assess information about what digital innovation means for newborn child development zeroing in predominantly on the digital supporting practices. The significant parts of the exploration procedure utilized in this study are depicted in the segment’s underneath.

Research Design

This exploration concentrates on utilized a **descriptive and correlational research design**. The expressive strategy makes it simpler to explore digital parenting methods and their relations to different aspects of youngster development. Also, the correlational methodology permits any potential associations between children's developmental results and digital openness to be examined. The fundamental point is to give an exhaustive comprehension of how, with regards to current digitalization, digital parenting impacts children's cognitive, emotional, and social development.

Population and Sample

- **Target Population**

Parents with children aged 6 to 16 who reside in Chandigarh, India, are included in the target population. Since it is believed that parents of children in this age range actively influence their kids' digital exposure and general development, this demographic has been singled out.

- **Sample Size**

In this study, **178 parents** participated in the research. The sample was judged sufficient since it maintained appropriate power for analyses while gaining a balanced percentage of the intended population.

- **Sampling Technique**

To ensure that the sample was representative **simple random sampling technique** was employed. By using this technique, selection bias was removed and it was guaranteed that every parent, irrespective of socioeconomic background, educational attainment, or geographic location, had an equal chance of being a part of the study. The results can be applied to a larger population thanks to the random sampling technique.

Data Collection

A **structured questionnaire** (with 5-point Likert Scale) was administered for parents to gather primary data for this study. The purpose of the questionnaire was to gather a broad range of data about child development outcomes and digital parenting practices. Digital Parenting Practices, Cognitive Development, and Emotional Well-Being are important elements of the survey. As the questionnaire was completed online, data collection was made easier and more effective. The respondents were asked to rate how much they agreed or disagreed with the statements regarding digital parenting and child development using a five-point Likert scale.

Variables of the study

- **Independent Variables**

A number of aspects of **digital parenting**, such as the amount of screen time, parental supervision of digital content, the type of digital media kids consumes, and initiatives to foster digital literacy, are independent variables in this study.

- **Dependent Variables**

The dependent variables are the **child development outcomes**, which are divided into three main categories: social development (social skills, peer connections), emotional development (stress levels, emotional well-being), and cognitive development (academic performance, problem-solving ability).

Tools used for Data Analysis

The survey results were evaluated using both descriptive and inferential statistical approaches.

- **Descriptive statistics:** Descriptive statistics were employed to summarize and present the sample's characteristics, including measures of central tendency (mean), dispersion (standard deviation), and frequency distributions. This provides an overview of digital parenting techniques and their associated developmental outcomes for children in the population sample.
- **Inferential statistics:** A variety of inferential statistical methods were used to investigate the links between various digital parenting practices and child development outcomes
    - **Pearson correlation test:** It was used to assess the correlations between categorical variables, such as parental involvement in digital activities, and children's developmental outcomes.

- **Independent Sample t-test:** The use of t-tests to test mean differences among groups.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1 or Figure 1 summarizes the descriptive statistics for children's cognitive development and emotional well-being in relation to digital parenting practices.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Digital Parenting Practices and Children's Cognitive Development and Emotional Well-Being

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	Minimum	Maximum
Digital Parenting Practices	178	3.67	0.72	2.00	5.00
Cognitive Development	178	3.70	0.68	2.50	5.00
Emotional Well-being	178	3.80	0.75	2.00	5.00

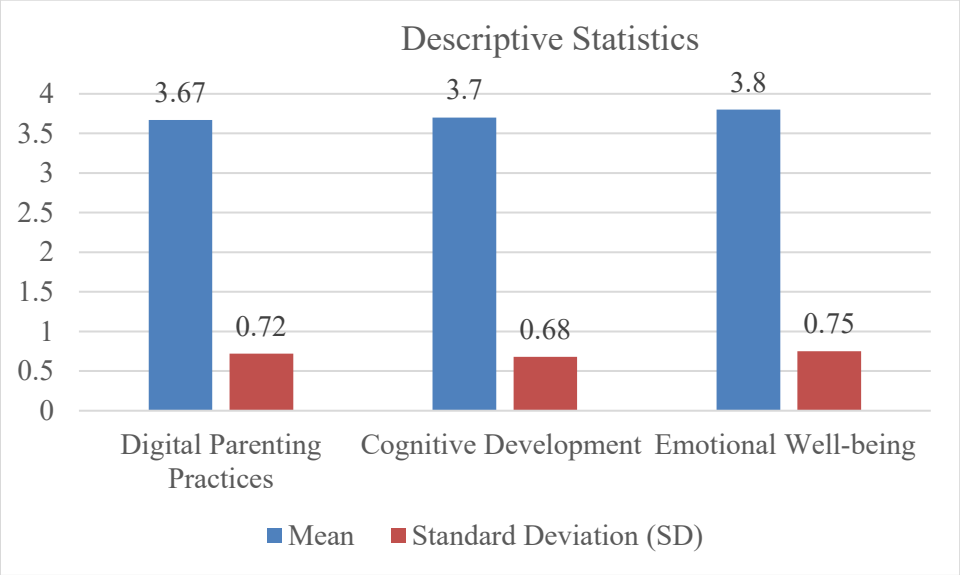

Figure 1: Graphical presentation of Descriptive Statistics

The digital parenting practices variable had a mean of 3.67 and a standard deviation of 0.72. According to these results, parents in the sample generally reported only moderate levels of engagement with digital parenting; nevertheless, because scores range from a minimum of 2.00 to a high of 5.00, there are notable variations for each individual. The mean for cognitive development was 3.70 (SD = 0.68), which indicates that the children chosen for the study had moderate development on average in terms of academic achievement, problem-solving skills, and critical thinking. The range of the lowest to maximum, which was 2.50 to 5.00, showed additional variation regarding the sample that was being studied. Lastly, children usually expressed positive emotional well-being, as seen by the mean of 3.80 (SD = 0.75) for emotional well-being. The study's children's varying emotional experiences and regulation were reflected in the emotional well-being scale, which had a minimum value of 2.00 and a maximum value of 5.00. With some variation seen within the sample, the descriptive statistics show that children's cognitive and emotional results and digital parenting practices were, on average, modest.

Table 2 or figure 2 presents the demographic profile of the Parents:

Table 2: Demographic Profile of Respondents (N=178)

Demographic Variable	Categories	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Age of Parent	18-30 years	40	22.47%
	31-40 years	60	33.71%
	41-50 years	50	28.09%
	51+ years	28	15.73%
Gender of Parent	Male	60	33.71%
	Female	118	66.29%
Educational Qualification	High School	30	16.85%
	Undergraduate	70	39.33%
	Postgraduate	55	30.89%
	Doctorate	23	12.92%
Occupation	Employed	120	67.42%
	Homemaker	50	28.09%
	Other	8	4.49%
Socio-Economic Status	Low	50	28.09%
	Middle	108	60.67%
	High	20	11.24%
Age of Children	6-10 years	65	36.48%
	11-13 years	75	42.13%
	14-16 years	38	21.91%

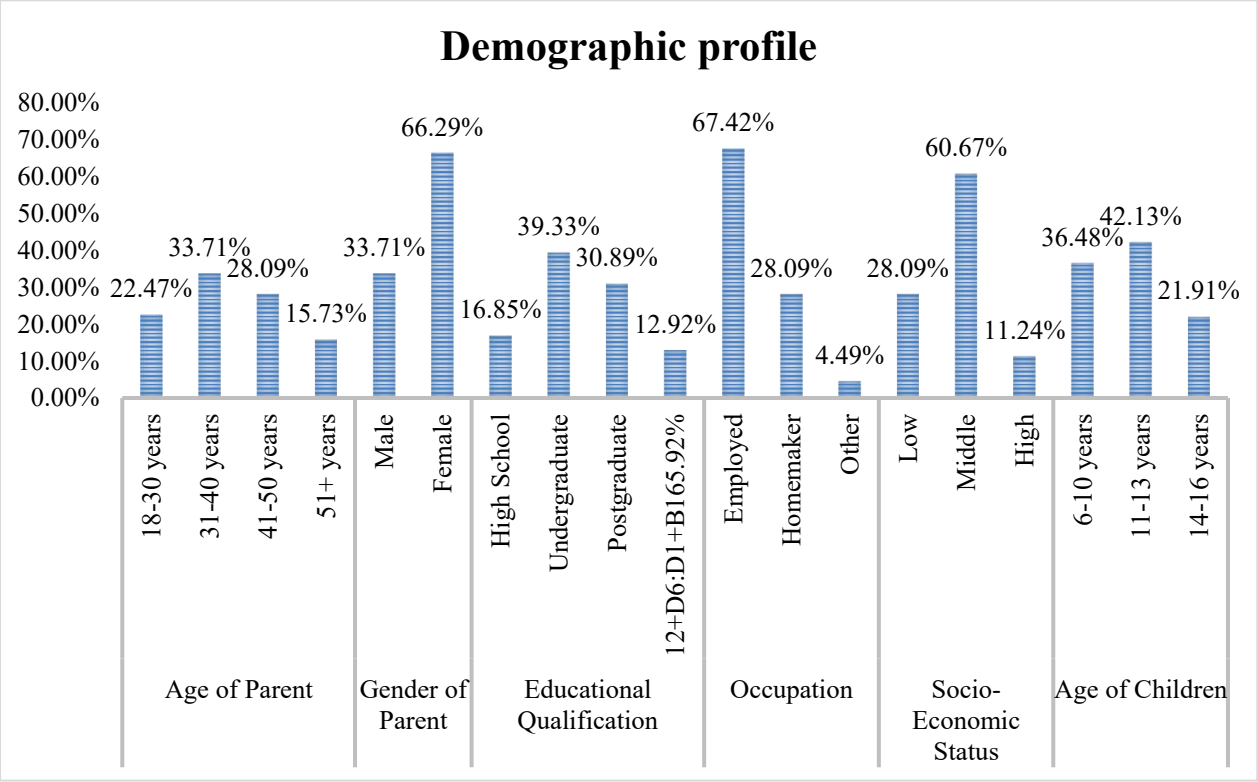

Figure 2: Demographic Profile of Respondents

A varied group of parents were surveyed for this study. Most parents were 31–40 years old (33.71%), with 41–50 years old (28.09%) being the second-largest. The sample was 22.47% 18-30 years old and 15.73% 51+. A majority of responses (66.29%) were female. The male percentage was 33.71%. Undergraduates made up 39.33% and postgraduates 30.89%. The remaining 16.85% had graduated high school and 12.92% had a doctorate. Most parents worked at 67.42%, followed by homemakers at 28.09% and "other" at 4.49%. The bulk of participants (60.67%) were middle socioeconomic, followed by 28.09% low socioeconomic and 11.24% high socioeconomic. The largest group of youngsters was 11-13 years old (42.13%), followed by 6-10 years old (36.48%) and 14-16 years old (21.91%).

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant relationship between digital parenting practices and children's cognitive development in India.

Table 3 presents the result of Hypothesis 1 to show the relationship between digital parenting practices and children's cognitive development in India.

Table 3: Result of Pearson Correlation between digital parenting practices (independent variable) and children's cognitive development

Variable	Digital Parenting Practices	Cognitive Development (Academic Performance)	Cognitive Development (Problem-Solving Skills)	Cognitive Development (Critical Thinking)
Digital Parenting Practices	**1.00**	**0.45****	**0.38****	**0.50****
Cognitive Development (Academic Performance)	**0.45****	**1.00**	**0.60****	**0.55****
Cognitive Development (Problem-Solving Skills)	**0.38****	**0.60****	**1.00**	**0.62****
Cognitive Development (Critical Thinking)	**0.50****	**0.55****	**0.62****	**1.00**

The findings of the Pearson correlation analysis indicate a strong association between various facets of Indian children's cognitive development and digital parenting techniques. Children's academic performance and digital parenting practices showed a moderately favorable correlation of 0.45, indicating that higher academic outcomes have been linked to more effective digital parenting. With a value of 0.38, the other association between digital parenting practices and problem-solving abilities was found to be smaller but still positive. This suggested that children's problem-solving abilities improved with increased parental participation in digital activities. With a value of 0.50, indicating a very good association, the strongest correlation was discovered between children's critical thinking abilities and digital parenting methods. Accordingly, kids with parents who use digital parenting techniques more

frequently are more likely to have stronger critical thinking skills. Overall, the findings of Hypothesis 1 provide credence to the idea that digital parenting techniques play a significant role in children's cognitive development, with the biggest impacts being shown in critical thinking and academic achievement. These findings imply that encouraging successful digital parenting techniques that support kids' cognitive development is necessary.

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant difference in the emotional well-being of children based on the level of digital parenting.

Table 4 presents the result of T-Test to show the significant difference in the emotional well-being of children based on the level of digital parenting.

Table 4: T-Test Results between emotional well-being and the level of digital parenting

Group	N	Mean (Emotional Well-being)	Standard Deviation	Standard Error Mean	Degrees of Freedom (df)	t-value	p-value
High Digital Parenting	**90**	**3.80**	**0.75**	**0.08**	**176**	**5.32**	**0.000**
Low Digital Parenting	**88**	**2.95**	**0.80**	**0.09**			
Total	**178**						

The results of the independent samples t-test indicate that the degree of digital parenting has a substantial impact on children's emotional health. The mean score for children whose parents reported using digital parenting techniques was 3.80 (SD = 0.75), whereas the mean score for children whose parents used minimal digital parenting techniques was 2.95 (SD = 0.80). The t-test findings show a p-value of 0.000 and a t-value of 5.32, both of which are statistically significant at the 0.01 level. This implies that children's emotional well-being varied significantly depending on the degree of digital parenting; the higher the level of digital parenting, the higher the emotional well-being. According to the findings, digital parenting techniques are essential for fostering positive emotional outcomes in kids and emphasize the need for parents to be actively and mindfully involved in their kids' digital exposure.

CONCLUSION

According to the findings of the study, digital parenting techniques play a significant part in determining the developmental outcomes of children in India. The results of this study suggest that there is a significant beneficial association between digital parenting and the cognitive development of children, particularly with regard to academic performance, problem-solving skills, and critical thinking. The study also revealed that higher levels of digital parenting improve the emotional well-being of children. This is because the study demonstrated that active parental control over the experience of digital can have a positive affect on the emotional well-being of a child. As a result, there will be a requirement for the development of tailored interventions in the form of educational programs on the subject of enhancing digital parenting abilities. This is especially true in the context of raising children in increasingly digitalized mediatic environments with an increasing dependency on daily life interactions. When parents improve their digital parenting skills, they will be able to improve

their children's cognitive, emotional, and social results as they grow up in a world that is becoming increasingly digital.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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