

**IMPACT OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT ON THE SOCIAL BEHAVIOR OF
STUDENTS AT THE MIDDLE LEVEL**

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Abstract

The present study investigates the impact of parental involvement on the social behavior of students at the middle level, particularly in the context of increasing social media usage. In today's digital age, social media platforms play a significant role in shaping students' communication patterns, relationships, and emotional development. The study aims to examine how parental monitoring, guidance, and communication influence students' social behavior, including cooperation, empathy, communication skills, and conflict resolution. In the present study, the observation method was used to examine the social behavior of middle-level students in the classroom environment. A structured observation checklist was developed to record specific behaviors related to social interaction and the influence of social media. The checklist consisted of clearly defined indicators such as cooperation, communication skills, empathy, emotional control, peer interaction, and adherence to classroom rules. Each behavior was categorized into three response options: Yes, No, and Partial, to ensure clarity and ease of recording. The findings reveal that most students demonstrate positive social behaviors such as respect, empathy, and cooperation; however, areas like conflict resolution and adherence to rules require improvement. The study further indicates that parental involvement significantly contributes to positive behavioral outcomes and reduces negative influences associated with social media, such as aggression and poor communication skills. The study concludes that balanced parental involvement, combined with awareness of digital risks, plays a crucial role in fostering healthy social development among students. It is recommended that parents, teachers, and policymakers collaborate to promote responsible social media use and enhance students' social and emotional well-being.

Keywords: Parental Involvement, Social Behavior

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Introduction

Parental involvement is the term used in this review as the behaviour exhibited by the parents both at home and in schools that is aimed at assisting the development of social/emotional skills of their children and leading them to educational success (Anderson & Jiang, 2018; Malik et al., 2021). We, similarly, talk about the significance of parents as social and emotional learning support systems in children, and they are viewed as a process in which children acquire and utilize the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that will enable them to interpret and cope with emotions, have goals, empathize with others, and make responsible decisions (Cetinkaya, 2017). One of the points that the authors make is that parents should be able to take care of their children, not only in terms of academic success but also social/emotional competence, so that they would be able to influence their shaping as the ones who are ready to become the members of the world community. The present authors believe that the social/emotional skills development supported by parents must be promoted in the life of their children so that they could perform on the top of the standards, not only at school, but also in all other life spheres.

Although peer influences are usually defining the online behavior of teenagers, the studies indicate that parental attitudes are as important and moderating in facilitating the online behaviors of their children. The relationship between the attitudes of parents toward social media, whether they consider it as a useful means of learning or a possible source of harm, has a strong effect on the way parents address the issue of digital behavior of their children (Livingstone et al., 2017; Fatima, Malik, & Ashraf, 2020). The negative attitudes of the parents toward social media are frequently manifested through the fears of the risks that are associated with it, including cyberbullying, indecent material, or the risks of negative mental health consequences. These parents will therefore tend to be even more strict with their rules and limitations: limiting the amount of time spent in front of the screen, limiting usage of specific platforms or even at all attempting to avoid the emotional and psychological consequences that might be caused by social media use on their children (Lauricella et al., 2016). On the other hand, parents who have a more favorable or promoting attitude to social media, tend to think that it is an effective means of contemporary communication, education, and interaction. These parents can afford to give their children increased freedom to use social media, and at the same time educate them on the responsible and safe use of social media. This has been a balanced approach, which usually includes candid discussions about the possible dangers of social media, including privacy issues and online security, so that the adolescents are prepared to make use of the media in a responsible manner (Padilla-Walker & Coyne, 2011).

Moreover, favorable parental attitudes have a tendency of promoting free channels of communication between the parents and children that help the adolescents narrate their online experiences. This transparency makes secretive and risky behavior over the internet less likely to occur, since the teenagers will seek advice and feel free to share any negative experiences that they might have had using the internet (Eastin et al., 2016). Through active intervention in the social media activities of their children by providing support as well as constructive control, parents can enable adolescents to develop more healthy habits pertaining to social media and develop a sense of self-regulation. Not only does this mediation reduce the exposure to online risks, it also promotes positive interactions thus enabling the adolescents to create a balanced and responsible relationship with social media.

In the era of digitalization, social media gained significant power in the life of middle-school students. WhatsApp, Tik Tok, Instagram, YouTube, etc. are used by students not only to communicate, but also to shape their attitude, self-esteem, and relationships. Although social media may provide potential opportunities in connection and creativity, when used excessively or inappropriately at an early age, it may create problems, including cyberbullying, social isolation, aggression, and lowered face-to-face communication opportunities. Since middle level students are still at an essential stage of emotional and social growth, the impact of online interactions is a matter of serious concern, both to teachers and parents. The role of parents in shaping the use of social media among the students is very important. The more actively involved parents in their interactions with their children on the scope of monitoring, discussion, and boundaries of children on the internet, the more positive impact they can have on the social behavior of children.

Nevertheless, parents in most instances are either not aware of the online activities of their children or they simply lack the know-how and resources to control their online activities. This lack of parental engagement can go into creating bad social habits like poor interpersonal skills, anxiety or having access to bad content. Although the issue has been raised in concern, little has specifically been researched on the relationship between parental involvement in the use of social media and the social behavior of students in middle level. The proposed study attempts to explore the degree to which parental engagement determines the social conduct of students within the middle school level with regard to how they use social media. The issue is whether or not more parental guidance can lead to development of positive social behavior or whether parental non-involvement is linked to behavioral problems at school and socially. The discussion of this problem will also give information regarding the ways families, educators, and policy makers can cooperate to create a more healthful social media use and guarantee the overall health and balanced growth of learners.

Baumrind's Parenting Style Theory

Diana Baumrind identified four parenting styles: authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful. Studies indicate that authoritative parenting—characterized by warmth combined with firm boundaries—is most effective in regulating adolescents' social media use (Padilla-Walker & Coyne, 2011).

- Authoritative parents are more likely to:
- Discuss online risks openly
- Establish reasonable screen-time rules
- Encourage self-regulation

In contrast, neglectful parenting correlates strongly with problematic social media use and reduced social competence (Lauricella et al., 2016).

Self-Determination Theory and Digital Parenting

Self-Determination Theory (SDT), developed by Edward Deci and Richard Ryan, offers a useful way to understand how parental involvement can shape children's behavior, including their use of social media. According to this theory, individuals are naturally motivated when three basic psychological needs are met: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Autonomy refers to feeling in control of one's own actions and decisions. Competence is the sense of being capable and effective in what one does. Relatedness involves feeling connected to others and experiencing supportive relationships. In the context of children's social media use, parental involvement can play an important role in supporting these needs. When parents guide children in a balanced and supportive way, they help them develop healthier digital habits. For example, allowing children some independence online (autonomy), helping them understand how to use technology effectively (competence), and maintaining strong emotional connections and communication (relatedness) can all contribute to more responsible and positive social media behavior.

When parents engage in supportive rather than controlling monitoring of social media use, children are more likely to develop responsible online habits. Research indicates that autonomy-supportive parenting fosters internal regulation of media consumption, while overly restrictive strategies may lead to secrecy or excessive use. In the context of social behavior, children who feel emotionally supported by parents demonstrate better peer communication skills and lower levels of online aggression. Thus, the quality of

parental involvement—not merely its presence—plays a crucial role in shaping digital conduct.

Attachment Theory and Online Social Behavior

Securely attached children tend to exhibit confidence, empathy, and emotional regulation—qualities that extend into online environments. In digital contexts, securely attached adolescents are less likely to seek excessive validation through likes, comments, or followers. Conversely, insecure attachment styles may contribute to problematic social media use, social comparison anxiety, or online dependency. Empirical studies have found that parental warmth and consistent involvement reduce the likelihood of cyberbullying behavior and improve conflict resolution skills among peers.

Social Capital Theory and Digital Networking

Social Capital Theory explains how relationships provide access to emotional, informational, and instrumental support. Scholars argue that social media platforms can either enhance or weaken social capital depending on usage patterns. Active parental guidance helps students use social networking platforms to build bridging social capital (diverse networks) rather than bonding social capital limited to small groups. When parents discuss online safety and responsible communication, children learn to cultivate meaningful interactions rather than superficial engagement. Research indicates that students with high parental engagement demonstrate stronger offline friendships and more balanced online networking habits. Therefore, parental mediation contributes indirectly to the development of healthy social capital.

Emotional Intelligence and Online Communication

Emotional intelligence (EI) has emerged as a significant factor in understanding students' social behavior. Studies show that parental involvement enhances emotional awareness and empathy, which in turn influence digital communication styles. Students trained in emotional regulation are less likely to post harmful comments or engage in online conflicts. Parental discussions about respectful communication, digital etiquette, and empathy can promote constructive online behavior. Emotional coaching by parents improves children's ability to interpret online messages accurately, reducing misunderstandings and peer conflicts. Thus, parental involvement strengthens both emotional competence and digital citizenship.

Objectives of Study

Following were the objectives of the study:

1. To examine the impact of parental involvement monitoring regarding the use of social media of students at middle level.
2. To assess the impact of parental communication regarding the use of social media on the social behaviour of students at middle level.

Research Method and Procedure

Quantitative data are gathered through structured questionnaires administered to middle-level students. In addition, the sampled students completed a brief rating scale designed to assess observed social behavior. This observational tool captured key aspects of students' social interactions, such as cooperation, communication skills, empathy, and peer relationships. The inclusion of data from teachers, parents, and students allowed for triangulation of data, thereby strengthening the reliability and validity of the study findings.

Observation is an important technique used to examine students' actual behavior in the classroom environment. In this study, an observation sheet was used to assess the social behavior of middle-level students and the influence of social media and parental involvement on their behavior. The observation checklist consisted of twenty indicators divided into two sections: Section A (Indicators of Social Behavior) and Section B (Indicators Related to Social Media Influence). Each indicator was rated using three categories: Yes, No, and Partial. The responses were analyzed using frequency and percentage to identify the extent to which each behavior was observed among students. The results are presented in the following tables, followed by their interpretation to better understand the patterns of students' social behavior in relation to social media usage and parental involvement.

An observation checklist was used to record behaviors such as interaction with peers, cooperation in group activities, communication patterns, emotional regulation, and adherence to social norms. Observations provided direct evidence of students' social behavior, complementing the self-reported and teacher-reported data. The primary purpose of the qualitative phase was to further explore and interpret the quantitative findings by gaining in-depth insights into how and why parental involvement influences students' social behavior in the context of social media use. The integration of interview and observational data allowed for a richer understanding of contextual factors, challenges faced by parents, and behavioral outcomes among students.

Observational Data Analysis

Data obtained through student observations were analyzed using frequency counts. The frequency of specific social behaviors, such as cooperation, communication, peer interaction, and empathy, was recorded and summarized. Frequency analysis helped in identifying the most commonly observed behaviors and supported the triangulation of data from questionnaires and interviews. Overall, the integration of quantitative statistical analysis, qualitative thematic analysis, and observational frequency analysis strengthened the credibility and validity of the study, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the impact of parental involvement regarding social media use on students' social behavior.

Results

Table 1

Section A: Indicators of Social Behavior

Sr. No	Statements	Yes (F, %)	No (F, %)	Partial(F, %)
1	The student shows respectful behavior toward peers.	14 (70%)	3 (15)	3 (15)
2	The student communicates politely with classmates.	15 (75%)	1 (5%)	4 (20%)
3	The student cooperates during group activities.	13 (65%)	6 (30%)	1(5%)
4	The student demonstrates empathy toward others.	14 (70%)	3(15%)	3 (15%)
5	The student resolves conflicts peacefully.	9 (45%)	9 (45%)	2(10%)
6	The student avoids using offensive language.	15 (75%)	3 (15)	2(10%)
7	The student shows self-control during social interactions.	12 (60%)	6 (30%)	2(10%)
8	The student participates positively in classroom discussions.	13 (65%)	5 (25%)	2(10%)
9	The student maintains healthy peer relationships.	12 (60%)	6 (30%)	2(10%)
10	The student follows classroom rules and discipline.	11 (55%)	6 (30%)	3 (15%)

The table presents the responses regarding different indicators of students' social behavior based on Yes, No, and Partial responses. The results show that most students demonstrate positive social behavior in different aspects.

1. For the statement "The student shows respectful behavior toward peers," the majority of responses 14 (70%) indicated Yes, while 3 (15%) responded No and 3 (15%) indicated Partial. This suggests that most students show respectful behavior toward their peers.
2. Similarly, for the statement "The student communicates politely with classmates," 15 (75%) responses were Yes, 1 (5%) was No, and 4 (20%) were Partial. This indicates that polite communication among students is commonly observed in the classroom.
3. Regarding cooperation in group activities, 13 (65%) responses were Yes, 6 (30%) were No, and 1 (5%) was Partial. This shows that most students cooperate during group work, although some students still face difficulty in collaborative activities.
4. For the statement "The student demonstrates empathy toward others," 14 (70%) responses were Yes, while 3 (15%) were No and 3 (15%) were Partial, indicating that many students are able to understand and care about the feelings of others.
5. However, the statement "The student resolves conflicts peacefully" shows comparatively mixed responses. 9 (45%) responses were Yes, 9 (45%) were No, and 2 (10%) were Partial. This suggests that conflict resolution is an area where students may need further guidance and support.
6. In the case of avoiding offensive language, 15 (75%) responses were Yes, 3 (15%) were No, and 2 (10%) were Partial, indicating that most students avoid using inappropriate language during interactions.
7. For the statement "The student shows self-control during social interactions," 12 (60%) responses were Yes, 6 (30%) were No, and 2 (10%) were Partial, suggesting that the majority of students maintain self-control in social situations.
8. Similarly, 13 (65%) responses agreed that students participate positively in classroom discussions, while 5 (25%) responded No and 2 (10%) responded Partial. This indicates that many students actively contribute to classroom interaction.
9. Regarding maintaining healthy peer relationships, 12 (60%) responses were Yes, 6 (30%) were No, and 2 (10%) were Partial, suggesting that most students maintain positive relationships with their classmates.
10. Finally, for the statement "The student follows classroom rules and discipline," 11 (55%) responses were Yes, 6 (30%) were No, and 3 (15%) were Partial, indicating

that more than half of the students follow classroom rules, though some improvement is still needed.

Overall, the findings indicate that most students demonstrate positive social behavior such as respect, polite communication, empathy, and participation. However, areas like conflict resolution, cooperation, and adherence to classroom rules require further improvement to strengthen students' social behavior.

Table 2

Section B: Indicators Related to Social Media Influence

Sr. No	Statements	Yes (F, %)	No (F, %)	Partial(F, %)
11	The student demonstrates behavior influenced by social media trends.	15 (75%)	4 (20%)	1(5%)
12	The student avoids aggressive behavior learned from social media.	15 (75%)	3 (15)	2(10%)
13	The student shows improved communication skills due to positive online exposure.	14 (70%)	4 (20%)	2(10%)
14	The student's face-to-face interaction is affected by social media use.	12 (60%)	6 (30)	2(10%)
15	The student demonstrates responsible behavior in discussions about online topics.	13 (65%)	4 (20%)	3 (15%)
16	The student shows awareness of online safety and ethics.	13 (65%)	5 (25%)	2(10%)
17	The student avoids cyberbullying behavior.	12 (60%)	6 (30)	2(10%)
18	The student displays confidence in social interactions.	17 (85%)	1 (5%)	2(10%)
19	The student shows emotional stability in peer interactions.	15 (75%)	3 (15)	2(10%)
20	The student's overall social behavior appears positively influenced by parental involvement.	15 (75%)	3 (15)	2(10%)

1. For the statement "*The student demonstrates behavior influenced by social media trends,*" 15 (75%) responses were *Yes*, 4 (20%) were *No*, and 1 (5%) was *Partial*. This indicates that a majority of students show behaviors that are influenced by current social media trends.

2. Similarly, regarding the statement *“The student avoids aggressive behavior learned from social media,”* 15 (75%) responses were *Yes*, 3 (15%) were *No*, and 2 (10%) were *Partial*. This suggests that most students are able to avoid adopting aggressive behaviors that may be learned from social media platforms.
3. For the statement *“The student shows improved communication skills due to positive online exposure,”* 14 (70%) responses were *Yes*, 4 (20%) were *No*, and 2 (10%) were *Partial*. This indicates that social media can also contribute positively to students’ communication skills when used appropriately.
4. In the case of the statement *“The student’s face-to-face interaction is affected by social media use,”* 12 (60%) responses were *Yes*, 6 (30%) were *No*, and 2 (10%) were *Partial*. This suggests that social media use may influence students’ direct interpersonal communication in some cases.
5. For the statement *“The student demonstrates responsible behavior in discussions about online topics,”* 13 (65%) responses were *Yes*, 4 (20%) were *No*, and 3 (15%) were *Partial*. This shows that most students behave responsibly when discussing topics related to online activities.
6. Regarding awareness of online safety and ethics, 13 (65%) responses were *Yes*, 5 (25%) were *No*, and 2 (10%) were *Partial*. This indicates that many students are aware of ethical behavior and safety practices while using online platforms.
7. For the statement *“The student avoids cyberbullying behavior,”* 12 (60%) responses were *Yes*, 6 (30%) were *No*, and 2 (10%) were *Partial*, suggesting that although many students avoid cyberbullying, some still require guidance regarding respectful online behavior.
8. A very high positive response was observed for the statement *“The student displays confidence in social interactions,”* where 17 (85%) responses were *Yes*, 1 (5%) was *No*, and 2 (10%) were *Partial*. This indicates that the majority of students demonstrate confidence while interacting with peers.
9. Similarly, for the statement *“The student shows emotional stability in peer interactions,”* 15 (75%) responses were *Yes*, 3 (15%) were *No*, and 2 (10%) were *Partial*, suggesting that most students maintain emotional balance in social relationships.
10. Finally, the statement *“The student’s overall social behavior appears positively influenced by parental involvement”* received 15 (75%) *Yes* responses, 3 (15%) *No* responses, and 2 (10%) *Partial* responses. This indicates that parental involvement plays a significant role in shaping students’ positive social behavior.

Conclusion

The study also highlights the importance of parental awareness and digital literacy. Parents who are knowledgeable about social media platforms and online risks are better equipped to guide their children. Therefore, enhancing parents' digital competence is essential for improving their involvement. Another important conclusion is that parental attitudes significantly influence their involvement strategies that is consistent with the result of previous study (Malik et al., 2019). A balanced perspective toward social media allows parents to support their children effectively while minimizing risks. This indicates the need for awareness programs that help parents understand both the benefits and challenges of social media. Furthermore, the study emphasizes the role of schools and policymakers in supporting parental involvement. Educational institutions should promote parent-teacher collaboration and provide resources to help parents monitor and guide their children's digital activities. Policy-level interventions can also play a role in promoting safe and responsible social media use among students. In addition, the study concludes that social media itself is not inherently harmful; rather, its impact depends on how it is used. With proper parental guidance, social media can become a valuable tool for learning, communication, and social development. Overall, the study reinforces the idea that a collaborative approach involving parents, schools, and society is essential for fostering positive social behavior among students. By promoting active parental involvement, it is possible to create a balanced digital environment that supports the healthy development of adolescents.

Discussion

Furthermore, the study revealed that students with supportive and communicative parents tend to have better interpersonal skills. This aligns with Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which states that children learn behaviors through observation and imitation (Nikken & Jansz, 2014). When parents model positive communication and responsible technology use, children are more likely to replicate these behaviors in their own social interactions. Thus, parental behavior itself becomes a powerful teaching tool. The findings also emphasize the importance of different parental mediation strategies. Active mediation, which involves discussions about online activities, was found to be more effective than restrictive mediation alone. This is supported by Livingstone et al. (2017), who argued that open dialogue between parents and children fosters trust and reduces risky online behavior. In contrast, overly strict restrictions may lead to secrecy and hidden social media use among adolescents. Therefore, a balanced approach combining supervision with communication is essential. Another important aspect revealed by the study is the role of parental attitudes toward social media. Parents who view social media as a learning and

communication tool tend to guide their children more constructively. On the other hand, parents with negative perceptions often impose strict rules without explanation, which may negatively affect children's autonomy and social confidence (Lauricella et al., 2016). This finding highlight that not only the level but also the quality of parental involvement matters.

Moreover, the findings indicate that parental involvement enhances students' emotional intelligence, which in turn improves their social behavior. Students who receive emotional support from parents are better able to manage conflicts, show empathy, and communicate effectively (Fatima, Hussain, & Malik, 2014). This is consistent with research suggesting that parental engagement contributes to emotional development and reduces aggressive tendencies (Brackett et al., 2011). The study also revealed that lack of parental involvement is associated with negative social behaviors. Students without proper supervision are more likely to engage in excessive social media use, experience social comparison, and develop poor communication skills. These findings support the work of Valkenburg and Peter (2018), who found that unregulated social media use is linked to anxiety, depression, and reduced self-esteem among adolescents.

Recommendations

1. Parents can use digital tools and applications to track and manage their children's online activities effectively.
2. Schools should develop strong communication channels with parents (e.g., meetings, WhatsApp groups) to discuss students' behavior and social media use regularly.
3. Schools should include digital literacy programs to teach students about responsible social media use, online ethics, and cyber safety.
4. Schools should provide counseling services for students facing issues like cyberbullying, social isolation, or behavioral problems due to social media.
5. Parents and teachers should motivate students to participate in sports, group activities, and face-to-face interactions to improve their social skills.
6. Educational institutions should develop clear policies regarding students' use of social media to ensure safe and productive usage.
7. Teachers should be trained to identify behavioral changes in students related to social media use and guide them accordingly

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