

« Social Values for Children in the Digital Age: The Role of the Family from a Thematic Analysis Perspective »

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Received: 26/10/2025 ; Accepted:09/04/2026 ; Published: 29/05/2026

Abstract

The relationship between the family and the child is evolving due to the impact of technology in the digital age, where traditional family interactions are changing, prompting parents to rethink their approach to child development and teaching them how to interact effectively in digital environments, and how this affects their social values. In light of these considerations, this study aims to explore the vital role of the family in shaping social values among children and adolescents within the prevailing digital environment. Digital technology has transformed communication patterns and methods of value transmission, presenting new challenges for families in instilling core values while navigating technological influences. Within the framework of qualitative research and using a case study approach, a study was conducted involving 12 families from diverse social and economic backgrounds. Data collection methods included in-depth interviews and observations, and the data were analyzed through thematic analysis. We hope that the results will contribute to a better understanding of how to empower families to navigate effectively the challenges posed by digital technology, while enhancing resilience and moral value-based behavior...

Keywords: Social values, children, digital age, family, thematic analysis.

Introduction and Statement of the Problem

In an era where screens dominate both leisure time and learning, the interaction between digital technology and child development emerges as a recurring core debate. The dawn of the digital age has witnessed unprecedented access to information, entertainment, and communication tools, radically reshaping the way children interact with the world around them. From educational applications specifically tailored to different age groups to virtual reality experiences, digital technology has unlocked new horizons for learning and exploration. However, amid these marvels, deep concerns exist regarding the potential effects on children's cognitive, social, and emotional development. (Woffindin, 2024)

These doubts and anxieties, heavily fueled by the panic and anxiety stimulated by modern digital technologies, revive a long-standing discomfort with technological innovation regarding childhood, as was previously the case with computers, electronic games, or television. This comes in the face of certain arguments and exaggerations about the transformation of childhood in the digital technology era (Mariya Stoilova, p. 02). Internet access provides a wider array of communication channels and audiences, alongside an unprecedented ease of connectivity anytime, anywhere, and often for free. This has amplified the personalized and private use of smartphones, giving rise to a youth "bedroom culture" across all ages, which had already been initiated by previous generations of personal media.

To understand the current impact of technology on child development, it is vital to examine the historical trajectory of technological advancement. The emergence of television in the mid-twentieth century played a major role in altering the landscape of entertainment and leisure activities for children worldwide. Subsequent decades witnessed the proliferation of personal computers, gaming consoles, and the widespread adoption of smartphones. With all these advancements, new ways for children to engage with digital technology have surfaced more than ever before (Woffindin, 2024).

Scientific evidence has shown mixed results regarding the impact of these technologies. While some studies have demonstrated clear and positive benefits on balanced socialization, learning, and even brain functions, others point to negative effects at the same levels. It depends heavily on the type of technology, its content, and the context in which it is used. There is evidence suggesting that online boundaries are fluid for contemporary children, as their play activities intersect between physical and virtual, material and immaterial realms in fluid and dynamic ways (Herwegen, 2024).

This highlights the significance of researching the utilization of digital technology in daily life. It is equally important to understand how the family-child relationship evolves in the digital environment, an importance linked to the content of digital technologies, as well as the purpose, the manner, the duration, and with whom children use these digital technologies. Recently, research into the role of digital technologies in child-rearing, family relationships, and methods of transmitting social values has increased. It has been noted that research on the role of digital technologies in raising children based on specific social values has expanded widely, an expansion tied to regulating the relationships of children and their families within the newly emerging digital environment.

Social values are undergoing major shifts brought about by rapid technological advancements and the pervasive presence of digital media. Consequently, the way individuals communicate, interact, and think about the world has changed drastically due to the influence of social networks, online communities, and digital content. This shift has not only altered social norms but has also impacted the core values that shape individuals' behaviors and beliefs. As children and adolescents become increasingly engaged in digital platforms, the family's role becomes crucial in guiding them through this evolving landscape (Toran, 2025).

The family serves as the primary unit for socialization and the transmission of values deemed essential for adapting to the complexities of modern life. In the context of digital technology, parents and guardians play a vital role in mediating their children's experiences with technology. One of the family's functions is to teach values such as empathy, respect, appreciation, and citizenship, thereby helping them develop critical thinking skills and discernment when evaluating online content. Since children are exposed to various perspectives and cultures through digital media, the family unit must adapt to foster an environment that encourages healthy engagement with technology while reinforcing core social values.

In light of the aforementioned considerations, this study primarily focuses on investigating and understanding the role of the family in shaping the social values of children and adolescents within the context of digital technology, by exploring family interactions (dynamics) and their impact on value formation. Furthermore, the research seeks to highlight the importance of family guidance in the rapidly changing digital landscape by:

- Investigating how families communicate and reinforce social values in the context of digital technology.
- Analyzing the role of parental involvement in guiding children's use of technology and establishing ethical digital behavior.
- Identifying the challenges families face in transmitting traditional values amidst the influence of digital culture.
- Exploring the opportunities available to families to utilize technology as a tool for shaping positive values and social integration.

Literature Review of Key Concepts

This section utilizes analytical inductive methods (the analytical-inductive review of related literature and research).

Family Socialization (The Family Context)

Socialization is a multidimensional process that depends on the goals and aspirations guiding adults in transmitting moral values and norms. This process is dynamic and interactive, varying across different cultural contexts and identities. Within this process, families play a primary role in nurturing children's behaviors, emotions, beliefs, and attitudes. Moreover, parents' socialization practices, parenting styles, and the approaches used in dealing with issues related to social values significantly influence the development of children's identities and their social experiences (Hilliard, 2022, p. 237).

The term "family socialization" refers to the process through which family members transmit values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors to children and adolescents. According to Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1991), the family is the foundational unit of socialization, particularly during the formative years of childhood. The family environment provides the primary context in which children learn social norms, develop moral reasoning, and become integrated into social and cultural values (Luckmann, 1991).

An analytical article titled "*Socialization and the Family Revisited*" points out that socialization, in its classical formulation, refers to preparing the child for participation in society. It is the core social process through which an individual becomes integrated into their social group by learning the group's culture and their role within it. The family is considered the primary home of socialization; during formative years, the family works to raise children on values, attitudes, skills, and roles that shape their personalities and lead to their integration into the larger society. This process is essential for shaping the child's self-concept through learning to play diverse social roles.

Socialization scholars have recognized that it is not limited to childhood alone but applies to learning any new social role and its associated values, attitudes, and habits. Based on this definition, socialization can be described as a lifelong process of learning new social roles. Scholars have also acknowledged that socialization can be reciprocal, as is the case between parents and children; it may reverse its direction, where children socialize their parents or grandparents. For example, adolescents may have to socialize their parents regarding the realities of their maturity and changing status, thus altering their parents' status in society (Bengtson, 2002).

Although socialization spans an individual's entire life rather than being confined to childhood experiences, most research attention has been directed toward children. Therefore, the most critical context for socialization remains the family, where the primary socialization of children takes place. Numerous studies exist regarding the consequences of parent-child interaction on child development, particularly regarding dimensions of parental support. Research indicates that parents are most effective as socialization agents when they express high levels of support or warmth alongside occasional firmness. Under these conditions, children are more likely to thrive, internalize parental values and expectations, and view parents as role models.

Conversely, low parental support coupled with reliance on coercive control and harshness is often associated with unfavorable and counterproductive socialization outcomes, which may necessitate different parenting behaviors. After all, children influence parents just as parents influence children. In addition to parental support and control, there are many other important variables within the family context that influence socialization processes and outcomes, such as the socio-political and religious values expressed by parents (Family Socialization).

On this basis, family socialization in the digital age is simultaneously a challenge and an opportunity. With technological advancement and the spread of social media, the influence of the digital environment on children and adolescents has become more pronounced. The family plays a pivotal role in guiding children toward utilizing this technology positively and safely, which impacts the development of their social and psychological identity.

In this context, family socialization in the digital age requires a delicate balance. On one hand, technology provides opportunities for learning, communication, and broadening horizons; on the other hand, it may lead to risks such as screen addiction, exposure to inappropriate content, and interaction with strangers. Therefore, it is crucial for families to adopt effective strategies to promote responsible technology use, such as setting clear rules for digital device consumption and fostering open communication regarding risks and benefits.

Furthermore, families must remain conscious of the impacts of digital culture on social values and norms. Engagement with digital content can shape children's perceptions of relationships, identity, and morality. Thus, parents and educators should actively participate in developing children's critical thinking skills to help them analyze information and choose beneficial content. In conclusion, the digital age represents a new challenge for family socialization, but it also provides opportunities to strengthen family bonds through shared communication and learning. Through wise guidance and active participation, families can ensure that their children experience a healthy and balanced socialization in this changing world.

The Impact of the Digital Age on Social Values

The advent of digital technology has profoundly altered the landscape of socialization across all its methods and levels. According to Louise Woffindin (2024) in an article titled "*The Impact of Technology on Modern Child Development*", which discusses the digital landscape, cognitive development, social development, social values, physical development, balancing screen time, and the role of parental involvement, her study asserts that digital media has reshaped social interactions, creating new spaces for identity formation and value development. Social media platforms, online gaming, and digital content expose children and adolescents to various viewpoints, alternative value systems, and global cultural influences that may differ from those promoted by the family.

In another article titled *"Upbringing in a Digital World: Opportunities and Possibilities"* by Alona Forkosh-Baruch (2018), the author presents the latest research and development advancements in this field, emphasizing technological progress alongside the socio-cultural dynamics of constructing new societies, where exploring children and youth as actors of change using diverse technologies becomes necessary. The article also highlights young children's increasing reliance on technology as part of their upbringing, both in play and learning. This level of familiarity carries implications for development, learning pathways, and value acquisition trajectories, particularly social ones.

The author contrasts upbringing in a traditional context—which mostly denotes parental capabilities and the home environment—with upbringing in the digital age as a radically different paradigm compared to previous generations. The author states that the traditional concept of upbringing is overly narrow, focusing primarily on the family's perspective and the manner in which one is treated and raised during early childhood by parents, particularly regarding its effects on behavior and ethical decision-making, or "the treatment and guidance received by a child from parents throughout childhood."

The author also discusses the greatest challenge: family awareness of the new opportunities and risks associated with upbringing in a digital world that defines a new paradigm of interaction between the child, family, relatives, friends, school, teachers, and the environment. Each of these relationships must be examined and studied to identify the essential features relevant to upbringing in the digital age, where these interactions play a fundamental role in regulating information flow and in monitoring and assisting information management from a very early age. Digital technology is rapidly penetrating our lives and has become an integral part of the social ecosystem. Consequently, the skills required of both children and adults are changing, focusing not only on technical aspects but also on life skills, social values, and socio-cultural practices (Baruch, 2018, pp. 02-03).

The digital age has brought a radical transformation in social values, as technology and social media have altered the way we interact and communicate, thereby affecting our conceptions of values, identity, belonging, and privacy. In an increasingly connected world, information and knowledge have become widely available, leading to a diversity of opinions and ideas, but also creating new challenges in understanding shared values. Digital technology contributes to shaping social values by enabling individuals to express their views and share their experiences in an unprecedented manner.

However, these platforms can also foster social division, as information bubbles can lead to starkly contrasting viewpoints and reinforce intolerance. Consequently, a collective awareness is required to stimulate constructive dialogue and reinforce fundamental human values such as tolerance and mutual respect. Moreover, the digital age redefines the concept of privacy, as individuals have become more prone to sharing personal information. This shift affects how individuals understand their relationships with others, requiring a re-evaluation of social boundaries and privacy in human relations.

In conclusion, the digital age represents an opportunity and a challenge for the evolution of social values. It is essential to adopt a conscious approach toward interacting with technology, focusing on promoting positive values such as empathy, cooperation, and respect. Through this, we can build a digital society that reflects robust social values that contribute to enhancing understanding and effective communication among individuals.

Parental Mediation in Digital Contexts

The digital age has introduced numerous challenges to the formation of traditional values. Studies conducted by Sonia Livingstone and Ellen J. Helsper (2013), titled *"Maximizing Opportunities and Minimizing Risks for Children Online: The Role of Digital Skills in Emerging Strategies of Parental Mediation"*, shed light on concerns regarding online risks, including exposure to inappropriate content, cyberbullying, privacy issues, and digital addiction. These challenges demand a new approach to parental mediation and family communication about values in digital contexts, given that parents generally bear the responsibility of managing their children's media use at home, being well-positioned to adjust the home media environment to suit each child's needs and parental values.

However, compared to decades when broadcast mass television was the most popular medium for children, the task for parents has become far more difficult, as contemporary digital and internet-connected devices are technologically more diverse and complex (Sonia Livingstone, 2017). Communication via digital technology has altered modern lifestyles and relationships, including family interactions.

This is what a study titled *"Families and Social Media Use: The Role of Parents' Perceptions about Social Media Impact on Family Systems in the Relationship between Family Collective Efficacy and Open Communication"* aimed to address. This study sought to deepen the understanding of the role of parents' perceptions regarding social media's effects on family systems within family functioning, specifically pointing to the relationship between collective family efficacy and open communication within family systems involving children and adolescents. A questionnaire designed to uncover the openness of family communication, collective family efficacy, and perceptions regarding social media's impacts on family systems and values was administered to 227 Italian parents who have one or more adolescent children and who use Facebook and WhatsApp to communicate with them.

The results highlight that these perceptions serve as a mediator in the relationship between collective family efficacy and communication openness, indicating that it is not only the actual impact of social media on family systems that matters, but also parents' perceptions of it and how capable they feel of managing their own and their children's social media use without harming family relationships. Consequently, there is an evident need to foster positive parental perceptions regarding the potential impact of social media on family relations. A strategy for this could involve enhancing knowledge on how to use social media functionally (Fortuna Procentese, 2019).

To confront this challenge, the concept of "Digital Parenting" emerges as an educational approach adapted to the demands of the era. Moving beyond mere surveillance and imposing restrictions, adopting the perspective of "Positive Digital Parenting" stands as an advanced approach. It does not limit itself to managing digital risks but places at its core the construction of a solid relationship with children based on mutual trust, deep understanding, and open, honest dialogue about technology use. It is a call for the co-use of digital technology, in which parents and children equip themselves with awareness, skills, and values, aiming to empower children and youth to utilize digital technology rationally and avoid its dangers while preserving family bonds, values, and strength (Mohamed, 2025).

It is also worth noting that parenting in the digital age is not merely about using technology in child care; rather, it extends to its impact on the parent-child relationship and overall family

dynamics, thereby affecting the nature of interaction and communication between them. With children's increased access to information and online communication, it becomes imperative for parents to possess a comprehensive understanding of technology and the ability to guide their children in using it safely and responsibly (Khattab, 2023), to ensure the safety and growth of children in a world full of digital challenges. As children and adolescents increase their technology use, parents' responsibilities grow more complex, requiring them to balance the benefits offered by this technology against potential risks.

Effective parental mediation in digital contexts requires a comprehensive approach that includes guidance, support, and monitoring. Parents must be aware of the digital tools and resources their children use and participate with them in digital experiences, thereby enhancing their capacity to understand how to handle different contents and situations. Parents must also learn how to use technology positively, which contributes to reinforcing moral and social values in their children.

Moreover, parents need to develop effective communication skills with their children, allowing them to discuss the risks associated with the digital world, such as cyberbullying, privacy, and misuse. Opening channels of dialogue helps build trust between parents and children, making it easier for children to talk about their experiences and anxieties. In conclusion, parental mediation in digital contexts represents a challenge that demands continuous adaptation and a deep understanding of modern technology. By providing appropriate support and guidance, parents can contribute to shaping safe and positive digital experiences for their children, thereby enhancing their ability to succeed in a complex and constantly changing digital environment.

Digital Engagement and Family Values

Family communication plays an important role in constructing children's self-perception, and it is the first step toward establishing contact with others. These relationships are mostly long-term bonds that have an inevitable impact on reinforcing social values (Daw, 2024), particularly family-oriented ones. This reinforcement not only contributes to maintaining family unity and cohesion but is considered the fundamental prerequisite for the interconnectedness and cohesion of society. This cannot be achieved except through instilling social values in children, especially in light of the growing reliance on and digital engagement with technology by both parents and children.

This increasing use of digital technology has brought along transformations encompassing highly complex social dimensions, alongside growing concerns regarding digital security (digital safety), forcing families to handle these transformations with extreme caution. In a study titled "*Digital Technology and its Impact on Family Values*", the research relied on symbolic interactionism to understand the impact of digital technology on the family value system. The theory asserts that meanings are not ready-made or imposed in advance; rather, they are continually constructed and reformulated through symbolic interaction among individuals.

Accordingly, family members' use of digital technology is not viewed as an external tool, but as a mediator that reshapes the symbols and meanings related to family relationships. Through this interaction, concepts such as parental authority, communication, belonging, and values alter, leading to the reproduction, modification, or even decline of traditional family values in certain contexts. This theoretical framework helps analyze how digital media becomes part of

the symbolic construction within the family, used as means of expression and interaction that affect value structures and behavioral patterns (Al-Hadidi, 2022).

As for the concept of digital engagement, it encompasses the responsible and ethical use of digital technology. According to Mike Ribble (2015) in his book *"Digital Citizenship in Schools: Nine Elements All Students Should Know"*, digital engagement includes elements such as digital etiquette, digital rights and responsibilities, digital performance, and digital security. Families play a crucial role in promoting digital engagement by modeling appropriate online behavior and discussing ethical considerations related to technology use (Ribble, 2015).

In the same context, a study titled *"How does Parental Media Mediation Regulate the Association between Digital Parental Awareness and the Parent-Child Relationship?"* notes that the parenting relationship evolves due to the impact of technology in the digital age. Traditional family dynamics change, prompting parents to rethink their approach toward their children's development and learn how to interact effectively in digital environments. Given these considerations, this study aims to examine the role of parental media mediation in the relationship between digital parental awareness and the parenting relationship. The study was conducted as a cross-sectional survey based on a quantitative research methodology. The study sample consisted of 291 fathers and mothers who have children in preschool. Data collection tools included a demographic information form, the Digital Parental Awareness Scale, the Parental Media Mediation Scale, and the Parent-Child Relationship Scale. The GLM mediation model was utilized for data analysis. The analyses revealed that parental mediation behaviors partially mediate the parenting relationship across all dimensions of digital parental awareness, including being a negative role model, digital neglect, active use, and risk protection (Toran, 2025).

In another study titled *"A Comparison of Parenting Strategies in a Digital Environment: A Systematic Literature Review"*, the evolving trends of parental mediation regarding children's online activities are deepened. With the increasing influence of the digital realm on their lives, the role of parents in guiding and protecting their children's online experiences becomes paramount. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of how parents address their children's online experiences and the challenges they face in ensuring responsible and safe online interaction. The implications of these findings offer valuable insights for both practitioners and researchers, emphasizing the necessity of active parental involvement and the importance of enhancing parents' digital competence. Despite limitations stemming from language and methodological variations among the included studies, this research paves the way for future investigations into digital parenting practices (Orehovachi, 2024).

Furthermore, research conducted by Henry Jenkins et al. (2016), titled *"By Any Media Necessary: The New Youth Activism"*, points to the importance of developing "participatory culture" skills, which enable youth to engage with digital media while maintaining core values such as respect, empathy, and integrity. These skills are increasingly considered essential social competencies that families must instill alongside traditional values (Henry Jenkins, 2020).

Parental involvement is a cornerstone in promoting family values and shaping children's social and psychological identities. Active parental involvement contributes to the development of positive behaviors and firmly established values that reinforce family ties and help children adapt to life's challenges. Parental involvement comprises a range of activities, such as open communication, supporting educational activities, and participating in social events, reflecting

parents' dedication to their children's interests. This involvement strengthens children's sense of security and trust, thereby contributing to building their personality and developing their social skills.

Moreover, the family values embraced by parents play a part in shaping children's attitudes toward the world around them. Values such as respect, tolerance, and cooperation are considered the foundation for building healthy relationships with others. When parents participate actively in their children's lives, they contribute not only to reinforcing these values but also to transmitting them to future generations. In conclusion, parental involvement is a decisive factor in reinforcing family values, as it helps build a healthy and positive family environment. Through continuous interaction and emotional support, parents can ensure that their children are raised within a framework of values and principles that prepare them to face life's challenges with confidence and positivity.

Study Procedures

1. Research Design

This research employs a qualitative research design, applying a case study approach to explore how families shape social values in the digital age. The qualitative method is particularly suited for this research because it allows for a rich and nuanced exploration of family dynamics, communication patterns, and the value transmission process that might be difficult to capture through quantitative methods alone. Additionally, the case study approach enables a detailed examination of specific family contexts and provides insights into the complex interplay between family influences and digital media.

2. Sample and Sampling Technique

The research sample consisted of 12 families residing in urban areas within the cities of El Eulma and Setif, specifically chosen to represent diverse socio-economic backgrounds, educational attainment levels, and different family structures. Each family included at least one child or adolescent (aged 7–20 years) who actively uses digital technology on a daily basis. A purposive sampling technique was utilized to guarantee the inclusion of families with varying approaches to technology use, parental mediation styles, and parental involvement.

3. Ethical Considerations

The research adhered to strict ethical principles, including:

- Obtaining informed consent from all participating family members, paying specific attention to age-appropriate explanations for participating children.
- Ensuring confidentiality by removing identifying information.
- Granting participating families the right to withdraw from the study at any stage.

The sample distribution included the following: Twelve families from different social and educational backgrounds. Within these categories, emphasis was placed on the necessity of including single-child families, extended families (more than three children), and nuclear families to capture diverse family dynamics, with an intentional selection based on the parents' educational levels.

4. Data Collection Methods

Multiple data collection methods were used to obtain comprehensive information regarding family socialization practices in digital contexts:

1. Scientific Observation:

The research field (topic), its questions, fieldwork conditions, and the nature of relevant information demand appropriate methodological and technical choices for gathering observations (Hiroko Norimatsu, 2017, p. 03). Scientific observation is a data collection tool used by researchers to gather live data with the aid of their senses in controlled or natural settings where the phenomenon occurs. A researcher collects rich, firsthand information from available sources by applying their senses to observe. There is a variety of observation techniques and instruments that a researcher can utilize to perform their observational task depending on the needs of their study (Satapathy, 2023, p. 153).

Based on the role played by the observer or researcher to gather information—whether being a participant or non-participant in the observation process—the type of observation applied in this study is:

- **Observation in a Natural Situation:** Within natural environment observation, the observer places themselves in the natural setting of the observed subjects' activities. In principle, the studied behavior or phenomenon is not triggered or provoked; rather, the spontaneous behaviors of the study participants are observed.
- **Complete Non-Participant Observation:** Here, the researcher or investigator does not act as a participant but solely as an observer. However, they may act either covertly or overtly depending on the study requirements. That is, the researcher may position themselves to observe the subjects' activities in their natural state without them realizing they are under observation through audio-visual recording, etc. In the overt form, the researcher acts as an observer by fully clarifying their intention to the subjects under study. In this study, the respondents were informed of the details and purpose of the research, and on this basis, the observation was conducted overtly.
- **Structured Observation :** In this type of observation, the researcher keeps everything organized, which provides a direction or structure for observing an object, event, or phenomenon. These observations are structured and systematic, helping the researcher predetermine what should be observed, how it should be observed, and how data should be recorded and controlled. The researcher needs to use well-planned tools, such as observation checklists or grids, recording devices, etc. Here, the researcher plays a passive, non-intervening, and non-participatory role with the study subjects. When starting to answer research questions by observing the activity or behavior of one or more individuals, several pre-data collection questions must be addressed, particularly those related to the relationship between the observer and the observed, and those concerning the conditions under which the observation takes place.

2. In-Depth Interviews :

Semi-structured interviews were conducted separately with parents and children/adolescents to explore their perspectives on family values, digital technology use, and socialization practices. The interview protocols focused on:

- Family communication regarding values.
- Rules and boundaries related to technology use.
- Parental mediation strategies.
- Perceived challenges and opportunities of digital technology.
- Experiences with value conflict situations between family teachings and digital influences.

Family Observation Sessions :Structured observation of family interactions during digital and non-digital activities provided insights into implicit value transmission, communication patterns, and actual (compared to stated) mediation practices. These sessions were conducted in the families' homes to capture authentic behaviors in natural settings.

Methodology and Data Analysis : The collected data was analyzed using qualitative research data analysis through the thematic analysis method, following the six-step process established by Braun, Virginia and Clarke, Victoria (2006).

Thematic analysis (or analytical analysis) is one of the methods used in analyzing qualitative data, where the researcher organizes and categorizes data into specific themes or classes, then explains and interprets them analytically to find an answer to the research question. Thematic analysis may be carried out by focusing on the commonalities across the data. It is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It organizes and describes data in rich detail, often going beyond description to interpret various aspects of the research topic.

Thematic analysis involves searching across a dataset—whether in-depth interviews, focus groups, or a corpus of texts—to find repeated patterns of meaning. In this study, the in-depth interview tool was utilized, relying on the thematic analysis approach for data analysis. Braun and Clarke are considered the most famous authors to write about thematic analysis in their booklet *"Using thematic analysis in psychology"*, which provides a definition and a detailed explanation of the thematic analysis method, outlining this approach or method in six fundamental phases:

Phase One: Familiarization with the Data Becoming familiar with the data and grasping its depth through repeated reading and initial documentation. (This data is gathered by the researcher themselves through direct contact with the research topic and respondents). This phase clearly illustrates one of the main reasons why qualitative research tends to use much smaller samples than questionnaire data, as reading and re-reading qualitative data is time-consuming.

During this phase, it is useful to start taking notes or marking ideas dedicated to coding, which the researcher will return to in subsequent phases. Once this is completed, the researcher will be ready to begin the coding process, which continues throughout the entire analysis process. This phase focuses on questions such as: How do I analyze the data? Where do I start? And how do I perform the coding?

Transcribing oral data is an important process in the first phase. If the researcher is dealing with oral data such as interviews, television programs, or political speeches, the data will need to be transcribed into a written format to conduct the thematic analysis. What is essential is that the transcription preserves the information the researcher needs from the verbal narrative, in a way that remains "true" to its original nature. The transcription process shapes the early stages of analysis, as rewriting the data yields a deeper understanding. Furthermore, the close and careful attention required to transcribe data can facilitate the interpretive, close-reading skills needed for data analysis.

Phase Two: Generating initial codes across the entire dataset : The second phase begins when the researcher reads and becomes familiar with the collected data, resulting in an initial list of ideas about what is in the data and what is interesting about it. This phase

involves producing initial codes from the data. Codes identify a feature of the data (semantic or latent content). Here, it is necessary to clarify what semantic content is and what latent content is; or more precisely, semantic or latent themes. Thematic analysis typically focuses exclusively or primarily on one level: either semantic or latent. With a semantic approach, themes are identified within the explicit or surface meanings of the data, and the analyst does not look for anything beyond what the participant said or what was written.

In contrast, latent analysis goes beyond the semantic content of the data. The researcher begins by identifying or examining the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualizations that are presumed to shape or inspire the semantic content of the data (Braun, 2006, pp. 88-89).

Phase Three: Searching for Them (Searching for themes by gathering codes into potential themes), The third phase starts when all data has been coded and collected, leaving the researcher with a list of the identified codes across the dataset. This phase, which refocuses the analysis at the broader level of themes rather than codes, involves sorting the different codes into potential themes, and collating all the relevant coded data extracts within the identified themes. This phase ends with a collection of candidate themes, sub-themes, and all the data coded in relation to them.

Phase Four : Reviewing Themes : This phase involves two levels of reviewing and refining themes. The first level involves review at the level of the coded data extracts. This means you need to read all the collated extracts (data observed and collected from interviews) for each theme, and consider whether they form a coherent pattern that serves the research. If they do, you move on to the second level of this phase. However, if some of these data do not fit, the researcher must rework the theme or create a new one.

At the second level of this phase, you re-read the entire dataset for two purposes. The first is to ensure that the themes are "accurate" in relation to the dataset.

The second is to code any additional data within the themes that was missed in earlier coding stages, because coding is an organic, ongoing process.

Phase Five: Defining and Naming Themes

The fifth phase begins by defining the themes you will present for your analysis, refining them further, and analyzing the data within them. By "define and refine," we mean identifying the "essence" of what each theme is about (as well as the themes overall), and determining what aspect of the data each theme encapsulates.

Phase Six: Final Analysis and Writing the Report

The sixth phase begins when you have a set of fully working themes, involving the final analysis and editing of a detailed report. It is important that the analysis provides a concise, coherent, logical, non-repetitive, and interesting account, and establishes an argument regarding your research question.

Study Results and Discussion

Family Communication Patterns and Value Transmission

The research findings revealed distinct patterns in how families communicate and reinforce social values regarding digital technology use. Families generally displayed one of three communication patterns:

A) Dialogue-Oriented Families: These families (6 out of 12) emphasized open dialogue regarding digital experiences and values. Parents regularly engaged children in discussions about online content, encouraged questions, and used digital situations the children encountered as educational opportunities for them. As one parent stated:

"We don't just set rules or orders; we explain why certain online behaviors are important, or vice versa (specifically regarding social media sites). When my daughter asked me about the meaning of cyberbullying, I intentionally discussed this topic with her. I tried as much as possible to make her understand that words on these sites hurt just as physical actions do, and what our family values say about treating others." Children in these families demonstrated a stronger internalization of family values and a greater ability to critically evaluate digital content against those values.

B) Compliance-Oriented (Command-Driven) Families: These families (4 out of 12) emphasized absolute obedience to parental authority regarding digital technology use. Rules were often presented without detailed explanations, and children were expected to adhere to family values without questioning or objection. One parent from this category explained:

"In our house, there are clear boundaries around what is acceptable online and what is completely rejected. We have taught our children that respect is non-negotiable, whether in person or online. They know we expect them to adhere to the values of our family and our Arab Muslim society." Children in these families showed a strong awareness of family expectations—especially girls—but they sometimes struggled to articulate the rationale behind value-based decisions when faced with novel digital situations.

C) Flexibility-Oriented (Tolerant) Families: A smaller number of families (2 out of 12) operated under this logic, particularly regarding the aspect of values. Parents in these families expressed trust in their children's upbringing, with one parent stating:

"Honestly, I don't understand half of what they do online. But I fully trust that we raised our children on good foundations and values, and they know right from wrong, whether online or in real life." Children in these families showed greater variation in integrating family values with digital behavior, and they often relied more heavily on peer influences to make decisions online.

Parental Engagement and Digital Behavior

Through the course of the study, it became evident that the nature and extent of parental involvement significantly influenced the development of children's ethical digital behavior. Several key dimensions of parental involvement emerged:

A) Shared Digital Learning: Families that viewed digital technology as a shared learning experience (8 out of 12) fostered a stronger value alignment between parents and children. In these families, parents expressed curiosity about their children's digital activities and participated in some aspects of them. This shared digital learning approach facilitated natural opportunities for discussion and learning, including instilling certain social values in children and adolescents. In this regard, one parent noted:

"Navigating the digital landscape requires a balanced approach that recognizes both the promises and dangers that technology poses in shaping childhood experiences. While leveraging the potential of digital aids enhances learning and stimulates creativity in our children, it is essential to protect this and set boundaries to prevent negative effects through

continuous monitoring of what children do. Because engaging with technology wisely means relying on critical thinking and responsible use. This is the kind of support children of all ages need." Another parent added: "Amidst these immense digital capabilities, there are legitimate concerns about the potential impacts on children's values. As screens turn into a constant companion in daily life, questions arise regarding their influence on cognitive development, attention span, and social values specifically. The allure of digital devices may lead to excessive screen time, and it may hinder other activities such as outdoor play and face-to-face interaction. Furthermore, unfiltered streams of content via digital channels raise concerns about exposure to inappropriate or harmful materials. This requires vigilant parental supervision and educational initiatives in digital literacy."

B) Challenges of Asymmetry in Digital Knowledge: Some families (4 out of 12) experienced tensions due to gaps in digital literacy between parents and children. Parents with limited digital knowledge often relied more heavily on restrictive mediation rather than guided education regarding values in digital contexts. One parent admitted:

"My children know more about technology than I do. Often, I feel anxious that I cannot guide them properly because I do not fully understand their digital world."

C) Value-Based Guidance: The most effective approach observed across some families involved parents who focused on raising and teaching their children values and working to instill them. These parents emphasized principles such as respecting privacy, critically evaluating information and content they are exposed to, empathy in communication, and accountability for digital actions. This awareness was reflected by a 15-year-old participant:

"My parents taught me to ask myself whether I would say something similar face-to-face before posting it online. This simple question helps me think about how my words affect others."

Challenges in Communicating Traditional Values

Families faced several significant challenges in maintaining traditional values amidst digital influences:

A) Situations of Value Conflict: All families (12 out of 12) reported instances where values promoted through digital technology collided directly with family values. Identified areas of conflict included: Individualism vs. collective family guidance; material consumerism and prioritizing self-interest vs. moderation, gratitude, and collective action for the public good; digital self-presentation (under an anonymous identity) vs. real identity; and the pursuit of instant gratification (psychological and material) vs. patience and delayed reward. One parent stated:

"Digital technology, especially social media sites, encourages the display of wealth and appearance, which conflicts with our family values of humility and finding value outside of material things."

B) Concerns over Preserving Social and Cultural Values: All families from traditional cultural backgrounds expressed particular anxiety about preserving cultural and religious values at a time when values are in a state of turmoil, especially with the clash between contemporary Islamic and global discourses. Parents expressed concern that global digital influences might hinder their children's connection to the social and cultural traditions of their immediate social environment. One parent explained:

"Our cultural values focus on respecting elders and community harmony, but online culture often encourages challenging authority, liberation, and individual expression over the opinion of the group and what is prevalent in society. We want our children to navigate both worlds without losing their social values and cultural roots."

C) Temporal and Attention Challenges: Many parents (10 out of 12) reported that the immersive nature of digital technology created practical obstacles to transmitting values, as digital devices competed for children's attention during family conversations and shared activities—the traditional vehicles for value transmission in the context of socialization. A mother of three observed:

"Family dinner used to be our time for connection and sharing values through conversation. Now, I constantly have to ask everyone to put their phones away while eating and share family conversation, but unfortunately, the digital world is always present in every situation, competing with family influence."

Technology as a Tool for Shaping Positive Values

Despite the challenges, the research identified several promising positive points through which families utilized digital technology to reinforce positive values:

A) Strategic Media Selection: Many families (10 out of 12) actively sought out digital content that aligns with or reinforces family values, with parents taking an interest in applications and games that encourage positive behaviors, learning, creativity, and the positive embodiment of values and constructive actions. One parent noted:

"We have found some online applications that focus on and encourage teamwork and helping others. Consequently, these apps provide opportunities for us and our children to discuss the importance of cooperation in all aspects of life."

B) Digital Service Opportunities: Some families (6 out of 12) engaged with technology as a means to express values such as empathy and civic responsibility. These families participated in online fundraising and collaboration campaigns, awareness campaigns, or digital volunteering opportunities. An adolescent participant described this:

"Our family helps manage a local charity through social media. This has allowed me to learn how to use digital skills to make a real difference in our community, showing me that technology can be a force for good."

C) Intergenerational Digital Connection Bridges: Some families (3 out of 12) created opportunities for grandparents or older adults to share traditional values via digital platforms. Video calls with family, digital documentation of social practices within customs and traditions—especially during occasions—and online family history projects (sharing and exchanging photos and videos) reinforced intergenerational bonds while preserving social and cultural values. One mother explained:

"During the pandemic especially, we started long weekly video calls with my parents who live in France. I intentionally set up a connection between my mother and my daughters, where they learned traditional cooking from my mother, and more importantly, family interaction and my children learning about many family stories they were ignorant of. In fact, technology reinforced our social and cultural connections in unexpected ways."

D) Critical Digital Literacy: Families that explicitly taught their children to evaluate digital content (5 out of 12) enabled them to recognize and evaluate value messages in digital media

against family values. These families asked their children questions about the motivations of content creators, discussed the hidden messages of some advertisements, warned of the dangers of blindly following self-proclaimed influencers, and encouraged the children to consider multiple perspectives. A 14-year-old female participant demonstrated this awareness: "My parents taught me to ask myself: What will I gain from the content I follow? And who are the people I am following? Our family values are reflected in my behavior and actions, not in my appearance or what I own."

Analysis and Discussion of Results

The Evolution of Family Socialization in Digital Contexts

The results indicate that effective family socialization in the digital age requires evolution and continuity rather than abandoning the traditional approach. Some families succeeded in adapting core socialization practices—such as encouraging dialogue, setting boundaries, and learning from consequences. The findings suggest that the fundamental role of the family as an institution that transmits values remains vital and effective, but the mechanisms through which this transmission occurs have evolved and differ entirely from the past.

Digital media has not replaced family influence, but it has altered the context in which family socialization operates. As one parent remarked:

"The principles of good parenting haven't changed; children still need guidance, boundaries, and explanation. What has changed is the environment in which we raise our children. We need seriousness and the use of wisdom in new situations."

The results also indicate that the child is affected by various interactions, and the digital environment now constitutes an important subsystem that interacts with the family system and its values, requiring intelligent responses from parents and guardians.

Social Factors and Parental Digital Mediation

The study's results revealed notable differences in how families from various socio-cultural backgrounds deal with value socialization in digital contexts. Families with higher social and educational status often used active mediation strategies and showed greater confidence in navigating digital environments alongside their children. These families typically enjoy:

- Higher levels of digital competency that facilitated shared and participatory use between children and parents.
- Encouraging the tracking of diverse digital content that aligns with family values in society and does not contradict them.

In contrast, families from lower or average educational backgrounds faced different challenges, including gaps in digital literacy between children and parents, which in some cases left parents unable to understand what their children were doing. However, the study results revealed that socio-educational status did not dictate the effectiveness of value transmission. Many families with limited educational levels showed remarkable creativity in adapting traditional value socialization to digital contexts, often relying on strong community and family networks for support.

Gender Differences in Digital Socialization

The study's results revealed distinct gender differences in how parents handle digital socialization. The findings reported that daughters are more frequently subjected to restrictive mediation focused on protection, while sons (males) described greater autonomy in their

exploration of the digital world. These differences reflected broader cultural values regarding gender roles, but they sometimes created unintended consequences.

Balancing Traditional Values and Adapting to Digital Reality

Central to this study was the keenness of families to learn how to strike a balance between preserving traditional values and adapting to digital reality. From the results, we find that most families are eager to transmit core social and family values while recognizing the changing context in which children must apply them. This includes:

- Recognizing the valid aspects of digital culture while maintaining a traditional perspective.
- Recognizing children as active agents in the socialization process rather than passive recipients of parental values.

Conclusion

Amidst these immense technological capabilities, there are legitimate concerns about potential impacts on child development. As this technology turns into a constant companion in daily life, questions arise regarding its influence on values, cognitive development, and attention span. The allure of digital devices may lead to excessive screen time, and it may hinder other activities such as outdoor play and face-to-face interaction. Furthermore, unfiltered streams of content via digital channels raise concerns about exposure to inappropriate or harmful materials. This requires vigilant parental supervision and educational initiatives in digital literacy.

Navigating the digital landscape requires a balanced approach that recognizes both the promises and dangers that technology poses in shaping childhood experiences. Although leveraging the potential of digital aids enhances learning and stimulates creativity, it is essential to protect this and set boundaries to prevent negative effects. Engaging with technology wisely means relying on critical thinking and responsible use; this is the support children of all ages need.

The research presents several important implications for families, educators, and policymakers interested in healthy child development in the digital age:

For Families

- Regular, open conversations about digital experiences form essential opportunities for value transmission.
- A collaborative approach to technology management best prepares children to apply values independently.
- Critical digital literacy skills serve as a vital companion to teaching and instilling traditional values.
- Shared digital learning reduces the asymmetry in digital knowledge and enhances the connection between parents and children.
- Preserving values and culture requires deliberate, specialized strategies, not just restricting technology use.

For Educators and Community Leaders

- Family education programs must address digital parenting within different social, cultural, and economic contexts.
- Supporting the development of parents' digital literacy enables more effective value socialization.

- Community initiatives can help bridge resource gaps for families with limited digital access.
- Educational approaches must recognize the cultural dimensions of digital socialization and integrate them into curricula.
- Digital inclusion policies must take into account how access affects families' capacity for value socialization.
- Media regulations should support parents' efforts to create value-compliant digital environments.
- Work policies that allow parents to participate in their children's digital lives support proper socialization.

Suggestions for Future Research in the Same Field

While this research provides valuable insights, it has several limitations that future research should address:

1. The sample size was relatively small, focusing on families in a single urban city. Future studies should examine these dynamics across more diverse geographical and cultural contexts.
2. The quasi-longitudinal design captured family practices at a specific moment (short duration of the study). Longitudinal research is needed to understand how digital socialization practices evolve over time and their long-term impact on value development.
3. The research relied primarily on self-reported data (by parents and children) and limited observation. Future research could use more comprehensive ethnographic methods or digital tracking with appropriate ethical safeguards.
4. The study focused primarily on parent-child dynamics. An expanded investigation into sibling influences, extended family networks, and community factors would provide a more holistic understanding of value socialization in digital contexts.

In conclusion, as digital technology continues to transform social interactions and cultural transmission, the family's role in value socialization remains vital, but it demands careful adaptation. By understanding how families successfully navigate these challenges.

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