Original Research

THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS USAGE ON THE PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP: A CASE OF MAZIMBU WARD IN MOROGORO MUNICIPALITY

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Abstract

This study aimed to explore the impact of social network usage on parent-child relationships at Mazimbu Ward in Morogoro Municipality. A cross-sectional research design was employed, with a sample of 60 parents selected through simple random sampling. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS, revealing both positive and negative effects of social network usage on parent-child relationships. Negative effects included reduced interaction time, missed connections, and conflicts arising from disagreements or jealousy. However, positive outcomes were observed, such as children reporting their progress to parents and teachers using social media for attendance tracking and communication with parents. To mitigate negative impacts and enhance positive aspects, the study recommends comprehensive training for both children and parents in social network usage and improved monitoring of children's online activities.

Keywords: *social media, social networks, internet, parents-children relationship.*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In today's digital age, social networks, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, have become essential platforms for quick electronic communication, enabling users to share personal information, documents, videos, and photos (Karpeh & Bryczkowski, 2017). The widespread adoption of these Social Network Sites (SNSs) has led to a surge in youth engagement worldwide, surpassing the time spent on traditional media like magazines and textbooks (Pew Research Center, 2015).

Compared to conventional media, SNSs like WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, E-mail, TikTok, Snapchat, and YouTube offer unique opportunities. They empower users to create content about their daily lives and share it with their peers, fostering self-expression. This ability to express oneself on SNSs significantly shapes the messages users share and their responses to others' messages (Pingree, 2007). It's crucial to note that young people's psychological well-being is influenced by both their ability to self-regulate and the quality of their relationships with parents (Charry, Goig & Martínez, 2020).

In recent years, the excessive use of social media has emerged as a notable concern due to its potential to supplant traditional human interactions with technological conversations. While online media offers various benefits for socialization and support, our study primarily investigates its impact on parenting skills, parent-child attachment, and whether it replaces or diminishes the essential quality time between parents and their children.

It's worth noting that social networking among adolescents and parents can foster feelings of connection. Many users of social network sites express their primary motivation as strengthening connections with family members, including their children. Some research indicates that social networking sites often lead to positive outcomes, such as strengthening friendships and enhancing overall well-being. However, other studies, like the work of Zimmer (2022), suggest that excessive use of social networking can become problematic and even addictive. High levels of usage have been associated with issues like depression, loneliness, increased alcohol consumption, and engagement in negative behaviors such as crime and prostitution.

Interestingly, there is limited understanding of how children's use of social networks influences their interactions with parents, particularly in Morogoro municipality. Addressing this gap was the primary objective of our study. We aimed to provide valuable information and data for researchers interested in the effects of social network usage on the parent-child relationship. Additionally, our findings could contribute to the formulation of social network policies concerning parent-child relationships.

2.0 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The study sought to investigate how usage of social networks affects parent-child relationships in Morogoro municipality. Specifically, the study sought to address three research questions (RQ):

RQ1: What are the types of devices and social network sites used by children at Mazimbu

ward in Morogoro Municipality?

RQ2: What are the ways used by parents to monitor children's activities on social networks at Mazimbu ward in Morogoro Municipality? and

RQ3: What are the effects of social networks usage on the parent-child relationship at Mazimbu ward in Morogoro Municipality.

3.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Theoretical Review

Types of social network sites used by children

Social network site is the phrase used to describe any web site that enables users to create public profiles within that web site and form relationships with other users of the same web site who access their profile. It is a web site that provides an opportunity for people to share their activities with family, friends and colleagues or to share their interest in a particular topic. Users of social networks create an online profile with bibliographic data, photos and any other information they choose to post (Chartrand, 2012). Users also communicate with each other by making their latest thoughts public in a blog- like format or via- email, instant messaging, voice or video-conferencing to select members. Social networking sites can be used to describe community-based websites, online discussion forums, chat rooms and other social spaces online in which the users can communicate whether in pairs or in groups. Types of social network sites include Facebook, Photo sharing, Video sharing, Twitter, you tube and blogs (Dalton, 2011)

Level of monitoring parents having over children's activities on social networks.

Study by Hirschi (2002) suggests that if parents monitor their children regularly includes knowing of their whereabouts and who they are with- that leaves even less room for adolescence to engage in misbehavior. This type of parenting should be balanced in a way that makes the child feel as though their parents are fair. If monitoring is overdone, the child will look at it more as an attack on them rather than as an act of care.

As a result, parents who use more aggressive methods in their approach to discipline their children whether that includes emotional or physical aggression will most likely receive the same behavior from their children (Jiménez-Granado, del Hoyo-Bilbao & Fernández-González, 2023). Communication is the last parent-child relationship component that either makes or breaks the bond between parents and their kids. Furthermore, when adolescents are shown support and encouragement instead of negative behavior by their parents, they develop a sense of belonging

(Strohschein & Matthew, 2015).

Effects of use of social networks on the parent- child relationships

Ray and Jat (2010) found that mass media has potentially harmful effects on the health and behaviours of children, as they are not yet mature enough to distinguish fantasy from reality, particularly when it is presented as real life. This can lead the child to have distorted views about the world and their relationships with other individuals. It can also lead the child in turn to spend less time with their parents, or doing outside activities, which can cause isolation and aggression over time. Children on social media may be more likely to be exposed to violence, harassment, and hate, which can have negative effects on their attitude (Ray & Jat, 2010). Parents play a vital role in the impact of social media usage by limiting hours on the computer and also monitoring sites visited.

In Ahn (2011) study to find out a recorded number of hour's teens spent online and its relationship to future measures of emotional well-being. The researcher found that longer use of the internet was related to increased depression, loneliness, and smaller social circles. The study also suggests that SNS can be isolating and have a negative impact on family life. Lee (2009) mentioned that time spent on SNSs can cause risky internet use that can increase depression and loneliness

3.2 Empirical Review on Cyber Security

In the context of the study on the impact of social network usage on parent-child relationships in Morogoro Municipality, Attachment Theory, developed by John Bowlby, offers valuable insights into understanding the emotional bonds between parents and children and how these bonds can be influenced by digital interactions (Winnicott, 2019). The theory posits that the quality of early emotional bonds between caregivers (in this case, parents) and children plays a fundamental role in shaping an individual's emotional and social development. These bonds are characterized by a sense of security and trust. Applying this theory to the study, it becomes evident that social network usage can introduce new dynamics into these crucial emotional connections. Parents and children often seek emotional support, validation, and connection on social media platforms, which can either enhance or disrupt the secure attachment they share. The study, framed within this theory, can delve into how the use of social networks either reinforces these emotional attachments by facilitating positive and supportive interactions and potentially straining them by introducing new variables, such as cyberbullying and excessive screen time, which can compromise the emotional security of the parent-child relationship.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research Design

The study used cross-sectional design which is defined as a plan for selecting subjects, research sites and data collection procedures to answer the research questions (Macmillan & Schumacher., 2001). It measures units from a sample of a population for only once at time. The population for the study were parents having children aged 14-18 in their family composition at Mazimbu ward in Morogoro municipality who use social network sites. This ward was purposely chosen because it borders the university campus where the researchers work and would therefore use minimum resources (time and financial resources).

4.2 Sample Size and Sampling procedures

The sample size consisted of 60 parents with children aged 14-18 at Mazimbu ward in Morogoro municipality. According to Saunders (2012), a minimum sample size of 30 respondents is adequate to bring normal distribution curves and remove biasness of the data. Stratified sampling was used to group parents with children aged from 14-18 years in their family composition with those with other aged children. Then systematic random sampling was used to pick 60 parents from the stratum.

4.3 Data collection and Analysis

Primary data were collected using an administered questionnaire while secondary data were collected from the published e-resources like e-books, e-journal articles, websites and ward register for complementary purposes. Quantitative data from the questionnaire were analyzed using SPSS program version 20 computer programme. The final results in the form of descriptive statistics were presented in the form of Tables indicating the percent and frequencies.

4.4 Validity, Reliability, and Ethical Considerations

This research followed all the guidelines required to observe validity, reliability and ethical matters in research in order to ensure that the reliability and validity of research findings were attained to enhance the credibility and accuracy of the data collected. and protect participants' privacy and confidentiality. Informed consent was diligently obtained from all participants—furthermore, ethical guidelines mandated that participants are not exposed to harm throughout the research process. The dignity of research participants was upheld, and their data were treated with the utmost confidentiality by ensuring that no respondent provided his/her name and analyzing data and

grouping them collectively. These ethical considerations are fundamental to the research process and are by the principles outlined by the research community's ethical standards (Bhandari 2023).

5.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

5.1 Types of devices and social networks used by children

In the survey, respondents were asked to share the devices and social network sites that their children use. The findings indicate that a significant majority, 63.3%, mentioned that their children use cell phones. Additionally, 16.3% reported that their kids use tablets, while 16.7% mentioned laptops, and 3.7% indicated desktop computers.

Regarding social networking sites, it was revealed that Facebook is the most commonly used platform, with 30% of respondents noting its usage among their children. Twitter was used by 15%, Instagram by 23.3%, YouTube by 25%, and WhatsApp by 6.7%. This comprehensive data is summarized in Table 1, providing insights into the prevalent choices for both devices and social networking sites among the surveyed respondents.

Table 1: Types of devices and social networks used by children N=60

Type of device	Response		Type of social network sites	Response	
	F	%		F	%
Cell phone	38	63.3	Facebook	18	30.0
Tablet	9	16.3	Twitter	9	15.0
Laptop	10	16.7	Instagram	14	23.3
Desktop computer	3	3.7	You tube	15	25.0
Total	60	100.0	WhatsApp	4	6.7

The analysis shows that 63.3% of respondents said they would rather communicate and access the internet via their cell phones. This represents a substantial portion of the populace. Moreover, it is evident that Facebook is the most popular social networking site, with 30% of respondents citing it as their top choice. This indicates that Facebook is the most popular social networking site, while cell phones are the most widely used means of internet access and communication among the population surveyed. The use of a cell phone may be a sign of a tendency toward internet access and mobile, on-the-go communication. However, a significant chunk of the population's online interactions and social lives may be influenced by Facebook, given its widespread use.

The additional information suggests that YouTube is the second most popular social networking

site, with 25% of the study participants preferring it. In terms of devices used by children in the study area, laptops are the second most commonly used, indicating a significant presence of these devices among the population. The study also found that children use a variety of other devices, such as tablets and desktop computers, showing diversity in technology adoption. Furthermore, the inclusion of social networking sites like Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp in addition to Facebook and YouTube demonstrates that the study participants are actively engaged in a variety of online social platforms. This suggests that the surveyed population is diverse in their preferences for both devices and social networking sites, reflecting a dynamic and multi-faceted digital landscape which is in line with the study by Lozano-Blasco, Mira-Aladrén and Gil-Lamata (2023). It may also indicate that children in the study area have a range of options for their online interactions and activities.

5.2 Ways used by parents to monitor children's activities on social network

Parents were requested to indicate the ways they use to monitor the children's activities on social media networks. The findings are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Ways used by parents to monitor children's activities on social networks (N=60)

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Limiting hours	12	20.0
Domestic activities	7	11.6
Educating them	37	61.7
Spending time	4	6.7
Total	**60**	**100.0**

From the responses gathered, it appears that a significant portion of parents, 61.7%, are taking the approach of educating their children about the negative effects of using social network sites. Only 20% reported limiting their children's usage, 11.6% engaged their children in domestic activities, and 6.7% opted to spend more time with their children. This data suggests that a majority of parents are focused on providing their children with awareness and understanding about the potential drawbacks of using social media platforms as shown in Table 2. These study results are further discussed in the following subsections:

Limiting hours

The results of the questionnaire explicitly show that 20%, of the study participants limit their children's time on social media. This emphasizes parents' efforts to govern and supervise their children's participation in specific activities, taking into account the potential effects on academic performance, social connections, and overall well-being. This conscious parental strategy demonstrates a proactive attitude to monitoring their children's digital consumption habits in order to promote a balanced and healthy lifestyle (Harriger, Thompson & Tiggemann, 2023).

Domestic activities

Furthermore, Table 2 shows that 11.6% of parents involve their children in domestic activities such as homework and other household chores. Parents who actively participate in these household activities not only monitor their children's actions (Murphy, Danaia, Tinkler & Collins, 2023), but also play an important role in their development by instilling a feeling of responsibility and collaboration.

Educating them

Table 2 shows that 61.7% of parents use education to supervise their children's social media habits. This instructional approach covers a wide range of topics, including teaching principles, emphasizing safety standards, encouraging effective decision-making, and instilling ethical behavior. Parents who stress the educational side of monitoring engage in open conversation with their children, providing direction and information to help them navigate problems, make informed decisions, and develop critical thinking abilities (Lichy, McLeay, Burdfield, & Matthias, 2023). This conclusion emphasizes the multidimensional importance of parental education as a key tool for promoting responsible and informed social media activity in children.

Spending time

According to the research findings, a significant proportion of parents, particularly 6.7%, actively spend time with their children as a purposeful method for monitoring their social media activity. Actively participating in these encounters emerges as a critical component in good parental monitoring. This active involvement allows parents to learn more about their children's social media experiences, understand their concerns, and celebrate their accomplishments (Abdullah, Poetri, Saputra & Al Haddar, 2023). Finally, this active participation strengthens the parent-child bond, emphasizing the importance of parental involvement in managing the obstacles and opportunities given by social media.

The implications of utilizing education to monitor and supervise children's social network activities are that it provides youngsters with knowledge and awareness about the possible risks and benefits of online connections. This approach, parents are actively engaging their children in talks and lessons about responsible and safe online behavior, rather than simply limiting and restricting their children's use of social networks. This strategy implies that parents prioritize open communication and digital literacy, which can have a variety of good consequences, including empowerment, independence, trust, communication, and long-term preparedness. However, parents must establish a balance between instruction and supervision, as some level of monitoring may still be required, particularly for younger children. The success of this strategy is dependent on the effectiveness of the educational efforts and the ongoing communication between parents and their children.

5.3 Effects of use of social networks on the parent-child relationship.

Respondents were asked about the effects of using social networking sites, and 83.3% reported that there were such effects, while the remaining 16.7% believed there were no effects. In summary, the majority acknowledged the presence of effects, whether positive or negative, related to social networking site usage, while a smaller percentage did not as show in Table 3.

The related question was asked to identify those effects and respondents answered as follows: 31.7% picked dangerous outcomes,18.3% picked to spend less time with partners, 6.7% picked increased loneliness, 36.7% picked poor academic performance, 6.6% picked increased conflict in the society. Based on the findings from the analysis done it has been discovered that there are effects of use of social network sites mostly effect was poor academic performance although other effects were picked. According to these results, respondents acknowledge that there might be both advantages and disadvantages to using social networking sites. In this instance, the main worry raised was over subpar academic results, indicating that a lot of people think using social media can make learning more difficult. This highlights how crucial it is to weigh the benefits and drawbacks of social media use online and the necessity of developing plans to lessen any unfavorable effects, especially when it comes to academic achievement. It also shows how cognizant the respondents were of the fact that interactions conducted online can have real-world repercussions that affect people individually as well as society at large. See Table 3

In order to confirm the findings reported by parents(respondents), the related question was asked about what are the effects of the use of social networks on the parent-child relationship as shown in table 3. 26.7% picked decreased time with a partner, 13.3% picked missed connections, 8.3%

picked jealousy, 51.7% picked heart feelings. These results suggest that parents are aware of a range of consequences, both favorable and unfavorable, associated with their usage of social media in their interactions with their kids. Maintaining healthy parent-child ties while using social media is crucial, as seen by the overwhelming sentiment of positive emotional connection (also known as "heart feelings"), despite certain issues such as less time spent with partners and feelings of jealousy. Table 3 summarizes the findings

Table 3: Effects of social networks on the parent-child relationship (N=60)

Effects of using social networking sites		
Variables	Frequency	Percent
Yes	50	83.3
No	10	16.7
Effects caused by social networks to children		
Dangerous outcomes	19	31.7
Spend less time	11	18.3
Loneliness	4	6.7
Poor performance	22	36.7
Conflict	4	6.6
Show the effects of use of social networks on the parent-child relationship		
Decrease time with a partner	16	26.7
Missed connections	8	13.3
Jealousy	5	8.3
Heart feelings	31	51.7

6.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusion

The effects of use of social networks on the parent-child relationship at Mazimbu ward was examined throughout this research study. Despite these types of social networks children prefer, the findings show that the effects of use of social network sites is higher, possibly due to dangerous outcomes such as viewing pornography, spending less time with their family, poor academic performance and lastly increasing conflicts in society. Effects of use of social networks on the parent-child relationship should be monitored in order to improve academic performance for their children, decrease conflicts in the society and spend more time with family.

6.2 Recommendations:

In line with the findings of this study, the followings are the recommendations:

- Training for all levels of social networks users (children and parents) should be taken seriously to ensure that they make adequate use of the social networks in order to reduce those consequences of misusing social media.

- spending more time with family members and live in the moment while less prioritizing socialization, hence you can share your daily experiences with them and also update them with all information you get from social media. That way one can keep up with both the worlds and not face any dislike.

- Social media consists of many counterfeit cases to mislead people so it is advisable to not only take social media in account but also refer newspaper and other mediums for relevant information.

- Little time using social networks should be implemented because it can also affect one's health physically like too much phone gazing can affect eyes, similarly hand position while holding phone can also cause severe injury.

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