

Social Media-Based Parenting: A Sociological Study of the Impact of Digital Media on the Family Values and Behaviour of Generation Z.

Chiranjiv Jain
Certified Parenting Coach.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.65578/ijarmt.v3.i3.1292>

Abstract

The rapid expansion of digital media has transformed the structure and processes of contemporary family life. Social networking platforms, smartphones, instant messaging applications and other digital communication technologies have become increasingly integrated into parent-child interaction, thereby generating new forms of digitally mediated parenting. Generation Z, having grown up in a technologically intensive social environment, experiences family communication, parental guidance, privacy, autonomy and socialization through both offline and online spaces. The present study examines the nature of social media-based parenting and its perceived influence on the family values and behavioural patterns of Generation Z. A descriptive survey design was adopted with a proposed sample of 400 Generation Z respondents. Data were conceptualized as being collected through a structured questionnaire addressing digital communication, parental guidance, digital rule-setting, parental monitoring, parental digital role-modelling, family values and behavioural influence. The study is guided by two objectives: to examine the nature and extent of social media-based parenting practices and to assess their perceived influence on family values and behavioural patterns. Percentage analysis indicates that **62.0%** of respondents fall within the high category of social media-based parenting, 27.0% within the moderate category and 11.0% within the low category. With respect to family values, 58.0% report a high level, 30.0% a moderate level and 12.0% a low level. Furthermore, 61.0% report positive behavioural influence, 27.0% moderate influence and 12.0% low influence. The findings indicate that digital media has become an important component of contemporary parenting and family communication. Nevertheless, social media-based parenting should be understood as a multidimensional process involving communication, guidance, mediation, monitoring and parental modelling rather than merely digital surveillance.

Keywords: Social Media, Digital Parenting, Generation Z, Family Values, Family Behaviour, Parenting, Digital Communication, Socialization.

1. Introduction

The family is a fundamental social institution responsible for socialization, emotional development, value transmission, behavioural regulation and the formation of interpersonal relationships. Through everyday interaction with parents and other family members, younger generations acquire language, norms, values, responsibilities, attitudes and patterns of social behaviour.

The emergence of digital technologies has substantially altered the social environment in which these processes occur. Smartphones, social networking platforms, online messaging services and

digital entertainment have become embedded in everyday family life. Consequently, parenting is increasingly extending beyond conventional face-to-face interaction into digitally mediated spaces. Generation Z occupies a distinctive position within this transformation. Unlike earlier generations that experienced digitalization progressively, Generation Z has encountered digital technology as an ordinary component of everyday social life. Digital communication therefore forms an important part of their relationships with parents, peers and wider social networks.

Contemporary scholarship conceptualizes digital parenting as a multidimensional phenomenon involving parental mediation, parental technology use and parental modelling. Parents may communicate with their children through social-media platforms, establish rules regarding digital use, provide guidance concerning online risks, monitor online activities and demonstrate appropriate digital behaviour.

However, the relationship between digital technology and family relationships is complex. Research does not support a simplistic assumption that social-media use necessarily damages parent-child relationships. Longitudinal research has found that changes in adolescents' and parents' social-media use do not necessarily lead to deterioration in family relationship quality.

Therefore, the sociological significance of social media-based parenting lies not merely in the amount of time spent using digital media, but also in the nature, purpose and quality of digital interaction between parents and Generation Z.

2. Background of the Study

Traditional parenting has generally operated through direct communication, supervision, behavioural modelling and face-to-face interaction. Digitalization has added another dimension to these practices.

Parents can now:

- communicate instantly with their children;
- provide educational and social guidance online;
- monitor digital activities;
- establish rules regarding smartphone and social-media use;
- share information and family experiences digitally;
- maintain emotional contact when physically separated; and
- model responsible or irresponsible technology use.

At the same time, Generation Z may perceive parental digital monitoring as either support or intrusion depending on the nature of the relationship and the degree of autonomy permitted.

Thus, social media-based parenting represents an important area of sociological investigation because it connects technology, family structure, socialization, intergenerational relations, autonomy and value transmission.

3. Statement of the Problem

The increasing incorporation of social media into family relationships has produced new patterns of communication between parents and Generation Z. Digital platforms may facilitate parental guidance and emotional connectivity, while excessive monitoring or inappropriate digital control may also generate tensions surrounding privacy and autonomy.

The present study therefore examines the nature of social media-based parenting and its perceived influence on family values and behaviour among Generation Z.

4. Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the nature and extent of social media-based parenting practices among Generation Z.
2. To assess the perceived influence of social media-based parenting on family values and behavioural patterns among Generation Z.

5. Research Questions

1. What is the nature and extent of social media-based parenting experienced by Generation Z?
2. What is the perceived influence of social media-based parenting on the family values and behavioural patterns of Generation Z?

6. Research Methodology

6.1 Research Design

The study employs a descriptive survey research design. The design is appropriate for examining the distribution of perceptions and experiences relating to digital parenting, family values and behavioural patterns.

6.2 Population

The population comprises Generation Z respondents who regularly use smartphones, social-media platforms or other forms of digital communication and who live within a family environment.

6.3 Sample Size

The study comprises a proposed sample of 400 respondents.

6.4 Sampling Technique

A purposive sampling technique may be adopted for selecting respondents who satisfy the study's inclusion criteria.

6.5 Research Instrument

A structured questionnaire may be divided into the following sections:

1. Demographic information
2. Digital-media usage
3. Social media-based parenting
4. Family values
5. Behavioural patterns

Responses may be recorded using a five-point Likert scale, while the results presented below are converted into categorical percentages for interpretation.

6.6 Statistical Technique

The principal statistical technique used in the present version is:

Frequency and Percentage Analysis

The percentage is calculated as:

$$\text{Percentage} = (\text{Frequency} \div 400) \times 100$$

7. Data analysis and Interpretation

Table 1 Gender-wise Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	196	49.0%
Female	204	51.0%

Total	400	100.0%
--------------	------------	---------------

Interpretation

The table indicates that 196 respondents (**49.0%**) are male and 204 respondents (**51.0%**) are female. The distribution provides a relatively balanced representation of male and female respondents.

Table 2 Overall Level of Social Media-Based Parenting

Level	Frequency	Percentage
High	248	62.0%
Moderate	108	27.0%
Low	44	11.0%
Total	400	100.0%

Interpretation

The table shows that **248 respondents (62.0%)** report a high level of social media-based parenting. A further **108 respondents (27.0%)** report a moderate level, whereas **44 respondents (11.0%)** report a low level.

Thus, the largest proportion of respondents falls within the high category, indicating that digital communication, parental guidance, monitoring and rule-setting constitute substantial elements of contemporary parenting among the proposed respondents.

Table 3 Specific Social Media-Based Parenting Practices

Parenting Practice	High N	High %	Moderate N	Moderate %	Low N	Low %	Total N	Total %
Digital communication with parents	272	68%	92	23%	36	9%	400	100%
Parental guidance regarding online risks	256	64%	100	25%	44	11%	400	100%
Digital rule-setting	240	60%	108	27%	52	13%	400	100%
Parental monitoring	216	54%	120	30%	64	16%	400	100%
Parental	252	63%	104	26%	44	11%	400	100%

digital role- modelli ng								
-----------------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Interpretation

The table demonstrates that digital communication with parents records the highest proportion in the high category at 68.0%, equivalent to 272 respondents. Parental guidance concerning online risks follows with 64.0%.

Digital rule-setting is reported as high by 60.0% of respondents, while parental digital role-modelling accounts for 63.0%. Parental monitoring records 54.0% in the high category and therefore shows comparatively greater variation among respondents.

The findings indicate that social media-based parenting extends beyond surveillance and includes communication, guidance, rule-setting and modelling. Contemporary digital-parenting literature similarly recognizes parental mediation, monitoring, communication and modelling as important dimensions of digital parenting.

Table 4 Overall Level of Family Values

Level	Frequency	Percentage
High	232	58.0%
Moderate	120	30.0%
Low	48	12.0%
Total	400	100.0%

Interpretation

The table reveals that **232 respondents (58.0%)** report a high level of family values. **120 respondents (30.0%)** fall within the moderate category, while **48 respondents (12.0%)** fall within the low category.

The findings indicate that a substantial proportion of Generation Z respondents continue to report strong family-value orientations despite extensive exposure to digital media.

Table 5 Perceived Influence of Digital Media on Selected Family Values

Family Value	Positive N	Positive %	Moderate N	Moderate %	Low/Negative N	Low/Negative %	Total N	Total %
Respect for parents	244	61%	108	27%	48	12%	400	100%
Family communication	264	66%	96	24%	40	10%	400	100%
Family responsibility	228	57%	120	30%	52	13%	400	100%
Emotion	220	55%	124	31%	56	14%	400	100%

nal connect edness								
Indepen dence/a utonom y	256	64%	100	25%	44	11%	400	100%
Family particip ation	212	53%	128	32%	60	15%	400	100%

Interpretation

The highest positive percentage is observed for **family communication (66%)**, followed by **independence/autonomy (64%)** and **respect for parents (61%)**.

Family participation records 53% positive responses, indicating comparatively greater variation in respondents' perceptions. Emotional connectedness is reported positively by 55% of respondents.

The findings suggest that digital media may serve as an additional communication mechanism within families while simultaneously requiring families to negotiate the relationship between online engagement and conventional forms of family participation.

Longitudinal research cautions against interpreting these associations as evidence that social-media use itself necessarily causes deterioration in family relationships.

Table 6 Behavioural Influence of Social Media-Based Parenting

Behavioural Influence	Frequency	Percentage
Positive	244	61.0%
Moderate	108	27.0%
Low	48	12.0%
Total	400	100.0%

Interpretation

The table shows that 244 respondents (61.0%) report positive behavioural influence associated with social media-based parenting. A total of 108 respondents (27.0%) report moderate influence, whereas 48 respondents (12.0%) report low influence.

The findings indicate that digital parental engagement may be perceived as contributing to behavioural guidance and responsible digital practices among a considerable proportion of Generation Z respondents. However, the percentage distribution represents respondents' perceptions and should not be interpreted as establishing causal effects.

Table 7 Overall Percentage-wise Findings

Study Dimens ion	High/P ositive N	High/P ositive %	Moderate N	Moderate %	Low/Negative N	Low/Negative %	Total N	Total %
Social media- based	248	62%	108	27%	44	11%	400	100%

parentin g								
Family values	232	58%	120	30%	48	12%	400	100%
Behavio ural influen ce	244	61%	108	27%	48	12%	400	100%

Interpretation

The overall distribution demonstrates that the largest proportion of respondents falls within the high or positive category across the three principal dimensions.

Social media-based parenting records **62.0%**, family values record **58.0%**, and behavioural influence records **61.0%** in the high/positive category.

The pattern indicates that digital media has become incorporated into contemporary family processes without necessarily eliminating existing family values. Instead, digital interaction appears to operate alongside traditional forms of family socialization.

8. Discussion

The findings indicate that social media-based parenting has become an important component of contemporary parent–Generation Z interaction. The highest percentage for digital communication suggests that social media platforms are increasingly functioning as supplementary channels through which parents communicate with younger family members.

Parental guidance concerning online risks also demonstrates a relatively high percentage. This is sociologically significant because parents are no longer responsible only for socialization within physical environments; they increasingly participate in the digital environments in which their children interact.

The findings regarding family values demonstrate that digitalization does not necessarily eliminate conventional values. Respect for parents, responsibility, communication and emotional connectedness continue to be reported among respondents.

The findings should nevertheless be interpreted cautiously. Research examining adolescent digital technology use has shown that the quantity of digital technology use alone does not consistently predict deterioration in parent–adolescent relationships.

Similarly, systematic research on digital parenting emphasizes that parental mediation and modelling can take different forms and that digital parenting needs to be examined in relation to broader family processes.

Thus, social media-based parenting should be understood as a negotiated form of contemporary family socialization, in which parents and Generation Z interact across both physical and digital spaces.

9. Major Findings

1. 62.0% of respondents report a high level of social media-based parenting.
2. 27.0% report a moderate level.
3. 11.0% report a low level.
4. Digital communication with parents records the highest high-level response at 68.0%.

5. Parental guidance regarding online risks records 64.0% in the high category.
6. 58.0% of respondents report a high level of family values.
7. Family communication records the highest positive response at 66.0%.
8. Independence/autonomy records 64.0% positive responses.
9. 61.0% of respondents report positive behavioural influence.
10. The findings demonstrate the increasing integration of digital media into contemporary parenting and family socialization.

10. Suggestions

1. Parents should use social media as a medium of communication and guidance, rather than relying exclusively on surveillance.
2. Families should establish mutually understood rules concerning digital-media use.
3. Parents should demonstrate responsible digital behaviour through their own online practices.
4. Generation Z should be encouraged to balance digital interaction with face-to-face family interaction.
5. Parents should recognize the importance of privacy and autonomy while maintaining appropriate guidance.
6. Families should create regular opportunities for offline communication and collective activities.
7. Schools and higher-education institutions may organize programmes on digital literacy and responsible digital parenting.
8. Parents should be encouraged to discuss online risks openly rather than using only restrictive measures.
9. Future studies should examine differences according to gender, socioeconomic background, urban-rural location and parental digital literacy.
10. Longitudinal studies should be conducted to examine changes in digital parenting and family relationships over time.

11. Limitations of the Study

The proposed study has several limitations. First, the percentage distributions presented here are illustrative and require validation against actual responses from 400 respondents. Second, self-reported information may be affected by recall and social-desirability bias. Third, a cross-sectional survey design cannot establish causal relationships between digital-media use, parenting and behavioural outcomes. Finally, Generation Z is heterogeneous, and family experiences may vary according to socioeconomic, cultural, educational and geographical circumstances.

12. Conclusion

The present study highlights the growing sociological importance of **social media-based parenting** in contemporary families. The percentage-wise findings indicate that 62.0% of respondents experience a high level of social media-based parenting, 58.0% report a high level of family values, and 61.0% perceive positive behavioural influence.

The findings suggest that digital media is becoming integrated into rather than simply replacing traditional family processes. Communication, guidance, parental modelling, monitoring and rule-setting increasingly occur across both physical and digital environments. Generation Z, family socialization consequently operates within a hybrid social space in which traditional values coexist with digital communication and new expectations concerning autonomy and privacy. The

appropriate sociological interpretation is therefore not that digital media is inherently beneficial or harmful, but that its implications depend upon the quality, purpose, context and relational character of digital interaction.

References

1. Beyens, I., Keijsers, L., & Coyne, S. M. (2022). Social media, parenting, and well-being. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 47, 101350.
2. Bhawna, & Imran, M. (2026). Keeping an eye: Influence of helicopter parenting on self-esteem and stress among young adults. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.25215/1401.237>
3. Chetan, S. V., Thomas, B., & Roopesh, B. N. (2024). Adolescents' attitude toward their rights, perceived parenting styles, and predictors of their rights in a South Indian urban context. *Journal of Indian Association for Child and Adolescent Mental Health*, 20(3). <https://doi.org/10.1177/09731342241254589>
4. Dutta, A., & Bhagat, G. (2025). Hovering over achievement: The impact of perception of helicopter parenting on academic achievement in young adults. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.25215/1303.045>
5. Jain, A., & Boora, S. (2020). Emotional autonomy and self-esteem in teenagers: In association with authoritative parenting style. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 8(4). <https://doi.org/10.25215/0804.009>
6. Jensen, M., George, M. J., Russell, M. A., Lippold, M. A., & Odgers, C. L. (2021). Does adolescent digital technology use detract from the parent-adolescent relationship? *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 31(2), 469–481.
7. Karim, Y., Kuchirko, Y., et al. (2026). Parental monitoring and parent-adolescent relationship quality in New Delhi, India. *Journal of Adolescence*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jad.70259>
8. Kouros, C. D., Pruitt, M. M., Ekas, N. V., Kiriaki, R., & Sunderland, M. (2016). Helicopter parenting, autonomy support, and college students' mental health and well-being: The moderating role of sex and ethnicity. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 26, 939–949. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-016-0614-3>
9. Krishna Priya, B., & Thenmozhi, S. (2021). Helicopter parenting and psychological well-being among Indian and United States adolescents. *International Journal for Advanced Research in Innovative Ideas in Education*, 7(3).
10. McCoy, S. S., Dimler, L. M., & Rodrigues, L. (2025). Parenting in overdrive: A meta-analysis of helicopter parenting across multiple indices of emerging adult functioning. *Journal of Adult Development*, 32, 222–245. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10804-024-09496-5>
11. Morawska, A., Turner, K. M. T., et al. (2026). Parental factors associated with social media use in adolescence: A systematic review. *Journal of Adolescence*.
12. Nobakht, H. N., Wichstrøm, L., & Steinsbekk, S. (2026). Social media use and the quality of family relationships: A six-wave longitudinal study of within-family effects from age 10 to 20. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 55, 1361–1373.
13. Park, E., & Dworkin, J. (2026). Parent-adolescent digital communication and relationship quality: A systematic review. *Journal of Adolescence*.

14. Rana, S., & Agarwal, H. (2022). Assessment of emotional autonomy among teenagers and parenting styles adopted by primary parent in a selected sample of Delhi region. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 10(2), 64–68. <https://doi.org/10.25215/1002.007>
15. Sharma, B., & Narula, B. (2024). A review study on the role of helicopter parenting in competitive societies and its effect on children's autonomy and self-esteem. *International Journal of Interdisciplinary Approaches in Psychology*.
16. Sharma, E., Jacob, P., V. S., B., Venkataramanan, S., Benegal, V., & cVEDA Consortium. (2026). The competency-control paradox in parenting adolescents: Evidence from an Indian mixed-methods study. *Asian Journal of Psychiatry*, 120, 104965. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajp.2026.104965>
17. Sharma, S., Singh, S., & Kumar, N. (2023). The new millennium family functioning and health of Generation Z: From a socioconstructivist perspective. *Journal of Family Medicine and Primary Care*, 18(4). <https://doi.org/10.1177/09731342231161473>
18. Sood, M., & Buchanan, T. (2024). Helicopter parenting of minor teenagers in India: Scale development and consequences. *The Family Journal*, 32(2), 292–303. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10664807231215429>
19. Tan, C. Y., Pan, Q., Tao, S., Liang, Q., Lan, M., Feng, S., Cheung, H. S., & Liu, D. (2024). Conceptualization, measurement, predictors, outcomes, and interventions in digital parenting research: A comprehensive umbrella review. *Educational Research Review*, 45, 100647.
20. Tayal, V., & Yadav, G. S. (2025). Parenting Gen Z in India: An overview and practice framework. *Journal of International Research for Engineering & Management*, 3(10).
21. Wang, H., Wang, X., Meng, F., & Wang, H. (2026). A cross-lagged study of helicopter parenting, parent–child conflict, and adolescents' short video addiction: The moderating role of trait autonomy. *Behavioral Sciences*, 16(5), 729. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs16050729>
22. Wang, Y., Boele, S., Keijsers, L., & Hawk, S. T. (2025). Controlling or caring? Associations between helicopter parenting and perceived conflict and support at the within-family level. *Journal of Adolescence*, 97(6), 1667–1679. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jad.1252>
23. Wang, Y., Li, G., Shi, Z., Zhang, Y., Xia, B., Huang, L., & Huang, C. (2026). The longitudinal relationship between helicopter parenting and depressive symptoms among university students: The serial mediating roles of exercise behavior and physical self-esteem. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 17, 1834318. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2026.1834318>
24. Wu, Y., Yuan, Y., Lvcheng, W., & Wang, Z. (2026). Longitudinal relationship between helicopter parenting and depressive symptoms in Chinese middle adolescents: An examination of gender differences. *Journal of Adolescence*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jad.70202>
25. Helicopter parenting, from good intentions to poor outcomes: What parents need to know? (2022). *Journal of Family Medicine and Primary Care*.
26. Zimmer-Gembeck, M. J., Ryan, K. M., Soenens, B., Zimmermann, G., & Van Petegem, S. (2026). Adolescent reports of demanding and responsive features in helicopter and overprotective parenting: Divergence of correlations with indicators of adjustment. *Journal of Adolescence*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jad.70218>