

Parental guidance and the development of children's moral reasoning in social media use: Patterns and implications

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Abstract

The rapid advancement of technology and the widespread use of social media have introduced new challenges for parents in guiding their children's moral development. This study explores the patterns of parental guidance in shaping children's morality within the context of social media use and examines its impact on their moral growth. Employing a qualitative approach with a phenomenological method, the research was conducted with parents residing in Citeureup Village, North Cimahi District. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation, and then analyzed using data reduction, validation, and conclusion-drawing techniques. The findings reveal three primary patterns of parental guidance: preventive, persuasive, and collaborative. These strategies are actively utilized by parents to nurture their children's moral awareness in the digital age. The study concludes that parental presence and active engagement play a crucial role in children's moral development – particularly in shaping ethical behavior, social interaction, and a sense of responsibility – ultimately fostering more thoughtful and responsible digital citizens. This research offers valuable insights for parents, educators, and policymakers in developing effective strategies to support moral and character education in the digital era.

Keywords: Guidance Pattern; Parents; Morality; Children; Social Media.

Abstrak

Kemajuan teknologi yang pesat dan meluasnya penggunaan media sosial telah menghadirkan tantangan baru bagi orang tua dalam membimbing perkembangan moral anak. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi pola



bimbingan orang tua dalam membentuk moralitas anak dalam konteks penggunaan media sosial serta dampaknya terhadap perkembangan moral mereka. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode fenomenologis, dan dilakukan terhadap orang tua yang tinggal di Desa Citeureup, Kecamatan Cimahi Utara. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis dengan teknik reduksi data, validasi, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian mengungkapkan tiga pola utama bimbingan orang tua, yaitu: preventif, persuasif, dan kolaboratif. Pola-pola ini diterapkan secara aktif oleh orang tua dalam menumbuhkan kesadaran moral anak di era digital. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa kehadiran dan keterlibatan aktif orang tua berperan penting dalam perkembangan moral anak—khususnya dalam membentuk perilaku etis, interaksi sosial, dan rasa tanggung jawab—sehingga anak menjadi lebih bijak dan bertanggung jawab dalam dunia maya. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi penting bagi orang tua, pendidik, dan pembuat kebijakan dalam merumuskan strategi yang efektif untuk mendukung pendidikan karakter di era digital.

Kata Kunci: Pola Bimbingan; Orang Tua; Moralitas; Anak; Media Sosial

INTRODUCTION

In today's digital era, children's use of social media significantly impacts their morals and character. Social media, with its addictive nature and lack of clear rules, often spreads inappropriate language and behavior, which is publicly exposed (Qorib et al., 2023). This contributes to declining children's ethics, particularly in interactions with peers and parents. Social media has become a tool for users to engage in activities of interest through online behavior (Zubaedi et al., 2021) and is now an inseparable part of children's lives. While it provides benefits such as creativity development, access to information, and social network expansion, it also presents risks like addiction, cyberbullying, and exposure to negative content (Ahmed et al., 2019).

Moral formation is fundamental in education, particularly for Muslims (Lubis, 2016). Morality is essential for positive societal change (Prayitno et al., 2022). Moral development aims to produce individuals who can solve life's problems based on established norms. Therefore, moral education is a top priority in Indonesia's education system, as it helps individuals distinguish between right and wrong according to religious values and norms (Imelda, 2018).

Children's moral development is strongly influenced by family guidance, with parents playing a crucial role. The family is the first educational institution where children receive mental and physical guidance (Pahlevi et al., 2022). Parents have three key responsibilities: (1) serving as role models by

understanding and practicing religious values; (2) nurturing children's potential through physical care and moral education; and (3) incorporating religious practices into daily life. The example set by parents is crucial in shaping children's morals, as demonstrated by the Prophet Muhammad (Utomo, 2022).

The family's role is foundational in developing children's character and preparing them for further education and a productive future (Utomo et al., 2022). As the first educators, parents significantly influence children's educational success, serving as motivators, facilitators, and mentors who shape their character from an early age. The values and behaviors taught in the family will form the basis for moral development (Rindawan et al., 2020).

Digital technology has drastically changed social life, including how children interact and access information (Haleem et al., 2022). Social media has become a central part of children's and teenagers' lives, offering benefits like access to information, educational opportunities, and platforms for creativity (Chassiakos & Stager, 2020). However, uncontrolled use can negatively impact children's moral development, leading to risks like cyberbullying, inappropriate content, digital addiction, and lack of ethical communication awareness online.

To address these challenges, parental guidance is crucial in helping children use social media wisely and responsibly (Walker et al., 2020). This guidance involves controlling social media usage and instilling values that encourage positive digital interactions (Sari et al., 2024). While studies have highlighted the importance of parenting styles in the digital age, few have specifically examined how parental guidance shapes children's morality about social media use.

Recent studies have explored parental guidance in shaping children's morals concerning social media, focusing on parenting styles related to digital behavior (Hayes et al., 2022; Gür & Türel, 2022; Sciacca et al., 2022; Purnama et al., 2022), the negative impact of social media on morality (such as cyberbullying and misinformation), and digital parenting strategies like parental controls and screen time limits (Maftei et al., 2022; Al-Ansi et al., 2023; Wernholm et al., 2019; Graham, 2022; Viner et al., 2019; Kross et al., 2021). However, most studies focus on the impact of social media, with limited analysis of how parental guidance directly affects moral development.

There is a research gap in systematically categorizing parental guidance patterns for shaping children's morality in the digital world. Most prior studies emphasize the negative effects of social media without examining the active role of parents in guiding their children. Moreover, local phenomenological studies on Indonesian parents' experiences navigating digital challenges remain limited. The rapid evolution of technology, including AI and complex social

media algorithms, has also not been thoroughly addressed in adaptive digital parenting.

This study aimed to categorize parental guidance patterns into preventive, persuasive, and collaborative types, an area that has been rarely explored in prior research. By employing a phenomenological approach within a local context, this research seeks to provide valuable insights into the experiences of Indonesian parents in educating their children about digital ethics and responsibility. It also aims to highlight how parental guidance influences children's morality in online interactions, rather than merely focusing on controlling or restricting social media use. This study is important as it offers practical recommendations for parents and educators to develop more effective strategies in addressing the challenges of parenting in the digital era.

This study offers significant novelty by exploring parental guidance patterns in the context of the widespread use of social media in the digital era, with a focus on the community in Citeureup village , Cimahi Utara. While many studies have addressed the impact of social media on children's moral development, this research presents a fresh perspective by emphasizing the specific approaches adopted by parents in the local context. Additionally, the study identifies and analyzes relevant guidance patterns, such as preventive, persuasive, and collaborative patterns, which have rarely been examined in depth in previous research. Thus, this study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the role parent's play in shaping children's morality amid digital challenges, while also offering practical recommendations for parents, educators, and policymakers to develop more effective guidance strategies in the age of social media.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research method with a phenomenological approach to explore parents' experiences in guiding their children's social media use and its impact on moral development. The phenomenological design was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of how parents in Citeureup Village, North Cimahi, perceive and respond to the moral challenges posed by digital media. This approach allowed the researcher to capture the meanings parents assign to their guidance strategies and how they adapt to technological changes.

The research was conducted in 2024 and involved parents of teenagers aged 10–18 who actively use social media. Participants were selected using snowball sampling, starting with key informants who then referred other

eligible parents. The study focused on uncovering patterns of parental guidance, particularly regarding ethical behavior in digital interactions.

Data were collected through three primary methods: in-depth interviews with parents to understand their strategies and challenges; participatory observation of parent-child interactions in the context of social media use; and documentation, including written rules, daily logs, and digital traces within the household, while data analysis involved three stages: data reduction to focus on relevant information; validation through triangulation of interview, observation, and documentation findings; and conclusion drawing to identify common patterns of parental guidance and their influence on children's moral behavior. Triangulation and validation ensured the reliability and objectivity of the findings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

This study found that parents' guidance patterns in shaping children's morality in social media can be categorized into three main approaches: preventive, persuasive, and collaborative. Each approach has specific strategies parents implement to help children understand digital ethics and be responsible in online interactions.

1. Preventive Guidance Pattern

This approach aims to avoid the negative impacts of social media before problems arise. Parents apply the following strategies: (1) Rule setting. Parents set clear limits on the time, duration, and types of social media children can use; (2) Digital literacy education. Children are given an understanding of the benefits and risks of social media so that they can use it wisely and responsibly; (3) Cultivating Moral Values: Before allowing children to access social media, parents instill the importance of maintaining ethics, honesty, and good manners in communicating in the digital world.

The findings are also supported by interviews with parents in Citeureup regarding implementing the preventive parenting pattern. Informant AK (Father, 42 years old) stated, *"I intentionally have not allowed my child to use social media freely. I told him he could have an account when he was old enough and responsible. Right now, I focus more on instilling values like honesty, respect, and not being easily provoked. In my opinion, prevention is better than regret later."* Meanwhile, informant BG (Mother, 36 years old) said, *"I always tell my child that not everything on social media is good. I've been teaching him since he was little to filter information, and if he's unsure, it's better to ask me or his father. Also, I installed monitoring apps on his phone to see what he's accessing."* Another informant, HR

(Father, 45 years old), mentioned, *"We agreed at home to set rules together about gadgets and social media use. One of the rules is that social media is not allowed in the bedroom, only in the living room. The goal is so we can still supervise, and if something suspicious comes up, we can discuss it immediately. We want our child to understand that moral responsibility also applies in the digital world."* The findings indicate that parents in Citeureup implement a preventive parenting pattern through social media access restrictions, early moral value instillation, and active supervision as efforts to protect their children from the negative impacts of the digital world.

2. Persuasive Guidance Pattern

This approach prioritizes open communication to build children's awareness without pressure. The strategies implemented include: (1) Open discussion. Parents encourage children to share their experiences using social media and discuss various problems that may arise; (2) Positive Motivation: Providing appreciation or rewards for responsible use of social media, for example, in learning or disseminating positive information; (3) Sharing inspirational stories. Parents use true stories or personal experiences to instill moral values related to social media use.

The findings are also supported by interviews with parents in Citeureup regarding implementing the persuasive parenting pattern. Informant NC (Mother, 40 years old) said, *"I don't immediately forbid my child from using social media. I prefer to talk with them and explain the positive and negative impacts. I help them build awareness to think carefully before doing something online."* Meanwhile, another informant, FA (Father, 44 years old), stated, *"When my child sees or wants to follow a trend on social media, I usually ask for their opinion first, whether they think it's appropriate or not. Then, I offer gradual guidance. This way, they learn to evaluate things from a moral perspective, not just follow the crowd."* Similarly, informant DA (Mother, 38 years old) said, *"I often discuss with my child what they see on social media. It's not about scolding them but encouraging them to think and understand the consequences. I want them to understand what should and shouldn't be done in the digital world."* The findings indicate that parents in Citeureup who implement a persuasive parenting pattern tend to guide their children through dialogue, discussions, and explanations about social media's positive and negative impacts. This approach aims to build the child's moral awareness independently, encouraging critical thinking and developing the ability to evaluate digital behavior ethically without coercion.

3. Collaborative Guidance Pattern

This approach involves cooperation between parents, schools, and the social environment in guiding children. The strategies used include: (1)

Collaboration with teachers and schools. Parents work with the school to monitor and educate children about the impact of social media; (2) Use of surveillance technology. Utilization of parental control applications or software to monitor children's activities on social media; (2) Creating a Positive Environment: Involving children in communities or social activities that encourage the development of good character and morals.

The findings are also supported by interviews with parents in Citeureup regarding the collaborative guidance pattern. Informant JN (Father, 43 years old) and Informant TS (Mother, 41 years old) said, *"We are both always involved in monitoring and discussing our child's social media use. We usually set rules about when they can use gadgets and what they can view. We want our child to feel supported by both parents and be open if there's something they don't understand or find suspicious."* Another informant, RA (Father, 47 years old) and LR (Mother, 40 years old), said, *"We try to support each other in teaching our child about the dangers of social media. For example, when I'm not home, my wife always ensures our child knows the boundaries of social media. We agree that this supervision should be done together so our child feels consistency and balance."* Meanwhile, another informant, ZS (Father, 39 years old) and SM (Mother, 38 years old), said, *"Our approach to parenting regarding social media is indeed more collaborative. When something needs to be discussed, we both get involved. For instance, if our child wants to follow a certain trend, we discuss it seriously or casually to help them make a wise decision"*. The findings show that parents in Citeureup practice a collaborative guidance pattern in managing their children's social media use. Parents emphasize joint involvement in setting rules, monitoring, and discussing online behaviors. This approach ensures consistency, balance, and open communication, allowing children to feel supported and guided in navigating the digital world. Through collaborative supervision, parents work together to establish boundaries and help their children make informed, responsible decisions regarding social media use.

4. The Impact of Parental Guidance on Children's Morality

The pattern of guidance parents apply significantly influences children's morality in using social media. Children who receive active and consistent guidance from their parents tend to be aware of digital ethics, such as respecting other people's privacy, avoiding hate speech, and not being easily influenced by hoaxes or negative content. Conversely, children who lack guidance or only accept control without understanding tend to be more vulnerable to the negative impacts of social media, such as cyberbullying, digital addiction, or unethical behavior in interacting online.

The findings are also supported by interviews with parents in Citeureup regarding the impact of parental guidance on children's morality. Informant RY (Mother, 41 years old) stated, *"I've seen it myself. Since I've been more involved in guiding and talking to my child about what is acceptable and what isn't on social media, my child has become more cautious. They are now more polite when commenting and often ask first before sharing something."* Meanwhile, informant TM (Father, 46 years old) said, *"Parental guidance is important because if we just let them be, they can easily be influenced. After regularly reminding my child about ethics and responsibility online, they've become wiser in using social media and even corrected a friend for spreading fake news."* Another informant, LN (Mother, 39 years old), mentioned, *"My child used to be easily influenced by trends that weren't appropriate, but after frequently discussing it with them and providing real-life examples, they've learned to control themselves. Parents play a huge role in shaping their children's mindset and behavior in the digital world."* The interviews indicate that parental guidance significantly impacts children's morality in social media usage. Regular involvement teaches children to exercise self-restraint, filter information, and behave respectfully online. The role of parents is essential in shaping children's thinking and attitudes toward the influence of the digital world.

Discussion

The direct implications of parental guidance patterns in shaping children's morality in the context of social media use on parenting practices are significant:

First is the importance of active parental involvement. The study highlights that active parental engagement in monitoring and guiding children's social media use helps shape their moral values. Parents who are consistently involved in discussions and rule-setting related to social media ensure that their children understand the potential risks and ethical standards they should follow online (Symons et al., 2020; Throuvala et al., 2021).

Second is encouraging open communication. By fostering open communication, parents create an environment where children feel comfortable discussing their online experiences (Strange, et al., 2018; Shin et al., 2021). This openness helps address any concerns or confusion children may have about digital content and encourages critical thinking and self-regulation.

Third is adaptability and flexibility in guidance. The findings emphasize the need for parents to adopt flexible and adaptive guidance strategies as social media trends and risks evolve rapidly. Parents should adjust their approaches to stay relevant by setting appropriate boundaries, engaging in regular

conversations, or using digital monitoring tools (Banić & Orehovački, 2024; Michelson et al., 2021).

Fourth is collaborative parenting. The research shows that collaboration between both parents strengthens the guidance provided to children. When both parents are involved in setting rules, monitoring social media use, and discussing the implications of online behavior, children are more likely to receive consistent and balanced support, fostering better moral decision-making (Harrison & Polizzi, 2022; Cino & Dalledonne, 2020).

Fifth, preventive and persuasive approaches. The combination of preventive measures (setting clear boundaries and restrictions) and persuasive techniques (engaging children in discussions about the consequences of their actions) helps children internalize moral values and develop a responsible attitude toward social media use (Shahzalal & Adnan, 2022; Hidayat, et al., 2024).

In practice, these implications suggest that parenting should evolve to address the complexities of the digital world, and both parents must work together to guide their children effectively. It also highlights the need for ongoing education and communication about digital ethics to help children responsibly navigate social media's challenges.

1. Children's morals towards the use of social media and its influence

Social media offers various benefits to its users, such as allowing interaction with anyone and anytime through an internet connection, learning and self-development, providing entertainment, and opening up job opportunities. However, its use, especially by children, also significantly impacts their morals or character (Wang et al., 2022). The addictive nature of social media and the lack of clear rules, both in language and behavior, often cause children to lose ethics in interacting with peers and parents (Jafarkarimi et al., 2016).

The results of interviews and observations in Citeureup Village show that some children experience moral changes due to social media use. Some children who frequently access viral content on platforms such as YouTube tend to imitate content creators' rude and disrespectful language, so this behavior is reflected in daily interactions with their friends. Other children on Facebook often show despicable behavior by discussing other people's bad behavior in the comment section or creating statuses that trigger conflict.

In addition, some children are so immersed in social media that they neglect their worship time and refuse to help their parents when asked because they are too busy with activities on social media. However, not all children show negative impacts. Some use social media wisely for positive purposes,

such as finding useful information, learning, or communicating healthily. These children can manage their social media time well and are not easily influenced by negative content in their real lives and online activities. This phenomenon reflects how social media can affect children's morals differently, depending on how it is used.

2. Patterns of parental guidance in fostering children's morals towards social media users and their effects

The pattern of parental guidance in providing religious education in the family places them as the main educators for children. Parents are expected to be able to guide, educate, train, and teach matters related to the formation of the child's personality and learning process. Family education aims to help children grow and develop optimally, covering physical, intellectual, and spiritual aspects, all of which become the main focus in family education.

In Citeureup, parents realize the importance of their role as educators. Religious values based on Islamic teachings, such as belief, faith, and morals, are instilled early on. These values include obedience to worship, honest behavior, respect, and courtesy to parents. Children gradually internalize these values, positively impacting their mental and spiritual development. This is a provision for children to face the challenges of the times, including the negative influence of social media. Parents are also responsible for providing direction on the wise and responsible use of social media (Syihab, N. 2024). When children use social media excessively, parents provide advice and direction so that their behavior remains to Islamic teachings (Fatmawati & Sholikin, 2019).

As role models, parents must understand and practice religious values before passing them on to their children. This attitude is by the example of the Prophet Muhammad (Taufik & Akip, 2021). By practicing religious teachings, parents indirectly provide good moral education (Ene & Barna, 2015). Based on observations in Citeureup Village, many parents have carried out their roles well through advice and exemplary behavior. At the age of children who tend to look for figures to imitate, parents try to be good role models by showing polite behavior, courtesy, mutual respect, and help in the family.

Habituation is also an important role of parents in shaping children's morals (Fitri, 2017). For example, by getting used to eating with the family to teach manners and respect, encouraging children to worship regularly, and building discipline to balance the freedom given. In Citeureup, parents provide clear directions, such as when children should complete schoolwork, help with homework, or access social media. Children's use of social media still requires guidance so they can use it wisely without forgetting their obligations as children and students (Hermawan, 2019). The existence of social media has

become a public consumption, online behavior, and necessity (Utomo, Prayogi, 2021). However, this limitation is given in a wise and non-authoritarian manner. Parents also encourage religious habituation, such as performing Maghrib and Isha prayers in the congregation. This helps children recognize the time of worship and stop activities, including social media use, when prayer time arrives.

In today's digital era, social media has become a primary need for many people, from children to adults (Wuriyanti & Febriana, 2022). Social media provides convenience in accessing various things but also creates challenges, such as negative influences that can affect children's morals (Rahman et al., 2023). In dealing with this, parents can adopt smart techno parenting, which educates children in a smart, wise, and effective way. This parenting integrates technological advances with education, including information literacy, limiting the time spent using digital devices, monitoring online and physical environments, and encouraging positive activities. These efforts help children use technology wisely while protecting them from any adverse influences that may arise.

3. Supporting and Hindering Factors for Children's Moral Development

The results of interviews and observations in Citeureup show that some parents have realized the negative impact that social media can have on children. Some parents also use social media to monitor their children's activities. They become followers or friends of their children on social media to monitor the cyber environment. In addition, they create family conversation groups involving their children, where they share religious, social, or other positive content. This aims to keep their children well-influenced, even in their digital interactions.

Supporting factors in parents' guidance to foster children's morals towards social media use include (1) school support, schools work together with parents in efforts to foster children's morals; (2) community support: the surrounding environment supports children's involvement in positive activities, such as joint sports, which help them to be more active and productive; (3) parental awareness, adequate understanding of the impact of social media encourages parents to provide early protection through moral guidance; (4) technological literacy, parents' knowledge of information technology allows them to monitor children's activities on social media effectively.

Some inhibiting factors, namely (1) limited views on social media: some parents consider social media only for young people, so they are less involved in monitoring their children's activities on these platforms; (2) time constraints:

parents who are busy working often do not have enough time to provide adequate attention and interaction, both in daily life and in monitoring children's use of social media; (3) peer influence: interaction with peers who are very active on social media can encourage children to follow suit, making it more difficult for parents to control this influence. By understanding these supporting and inhibiting factors, parents can be more strategic in providing effective guidance so that children can utilize social media wisely without neglecting the moral values taught.

Based on the explanation above, practical observations in Citeureup Village showed many parents instill religious and moral values in their children from an early age, such as honesty, respect, and discipline in worship. These values play a crucial role in shaping children's mental and spiritual well-being, enabling them to face modern challenges, including the negative impacts of social media. Parents also guide social media usage to ensure it aligns with Islamic teachings and does not deviate from established norms. In addition to giving advice, leading by example is a method widely applied by many parents through religious teachings. By demonstrating politeness, mutual respect, and helping one another within the family, parents indirectly teach good morals to their children.

Furthermore, habitual practices such as eating together, setting study schedules, and wisely limiting social media usage without being authoritarian are implemented (Hollis et al., 2020). Some parents also adopt smart technology parenting by combining digital literacy, monitoring online activities, and restricting screen time. This approach helps children stay positively connected to technology while maintaining moral values and fulfilling their responsibilities.

From a theoretical perspective, parents are the first educators in the family to guide children in developing good morals through social media use (Dong et al., 2020). Children who frequently access viral content tend to mimic the inappropriate language and behavior of content creators, which then manifests in their daily interactions. Additionally, some children engage in negative behaviors on social media, such as posting harsh comments or provoking conflicts through their posts (Vannucci et al., 2020). Others become overly immersed in social media, neglecting their religious duties and avoiding household responsibilities. However, not all children experience negative effects. Some can use social media wisely to seek useful information, learn, and engage in healthy communication (Obermayer et al., 2022). This indicates that the impact of social media on children's morality depends on how they use it and the guidance their parents provide. Social media usage has a significant

impact on children's morality. On one hand, it provides benefits such as access to information, learning opportunities, and entertainment (Degner et al., 2022). On the other hand, it's addictive nature and lack of clear communication rules cause some children to lose their sense of ethics in interactions, whether with peers or parents.

In efforts to shape children's morality in social media usage, several supporting and inhibiting factors influence the process. Supporting factors include school support in collaboration with parents to instill digital ethics, a positive social environment, and parental awareness of social media's impact, leading them to take early protective measures. Additionally, parents' technological literacy is crucial in effectively monitoring and controlling their children's online activities. However, some challenges hinder this process, such as parents' limited understanding of social media, lack of time due to work commitments, and peer influence that encourages children to engage more actively in social media without proper supervision. By understanding these factors, parents can take strategic steps to guide their children in using social media wisely without neglecting the moral values they have been taught.

The findings of this study are highly relevant to Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of moral development (Lafmejani, 2019). This theory outlines those children's moral reasoning progresses through three levels: pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional (Fang et al., 2017). Each level represents increasingly complex stages of moral thinking, beginning with obedience based on fear of punishment and advancing toward understanding universal ethical principles (Bandura, 2014).

In the context of social media use, the role of parents becomes crucial in helping children navigate these developmental stages. Parental guidance provided through open communication, clear rule-setting, and discussions about the consequences of online behavior can support children in progressing from morality based solely on external consequences (pre-conventional) to morality grounded in social norms and higher moral awareness (conventional to post-conventional) (Symons et al., 2020).

Furthermore, active and persuasive parental involvement creates an environment that supports children's internalization of moral values. When children feel heard and are invited to discuss their online experiences reflectively, they are better equipped to understand their actions' impact and develop a sense of responsibility. Thus, a responsive and communicative parenting style can significantly strengthen children's moral development in the face of digital age challenges.

CONCLUSION

The main findings of this study indicate that parental guidance plays a crucial role in shaping children's moral development in the context of social media use. Three primary patterns of parental guidance were identified: preventive, persuasive, and collaborative. Children who receive consistent guidance tend to exhibit ethical behavior, engage in respectful communication, and use social media for learning and self-improvement. Conversely, a lack of parental supervision can expose children to negative influences such as cyber bullying, misinformation, and inappropriate content, all of which may hinder their moral and social development. However, the effectiveness of these strategies is challenged by factors such as limited parental digital literacy, time constraints due to work commitments, and peer influence. Additionally, the rapid evolution of social media requires parents to adapt their approaches continually.

The implications of these findings point to the critical need for enhancing digital parenting literacy and adopting more adaptive and proactive parenting strategies. Schools strategically strengthen digital ethics education through curriculum integration, teacher training, and technology-based character development programs. Collaboration between schools, parents, and communities is essential in creating an environment that supports children's moral development in the digital age. Therefore, school policies should support initiatives that enhance families' digital competencies and create spaces for dialogue between educators and parents.

For future research, it is recommended to broaden the scope of the study to include the role of educational institutions in fostering children's digital ethics and to examine how cultural backgrounds influence parental guidance patterns. Given the rapid advancement of technology, further exploration into the impact of artificial intelligence and virtual reality on children's moral development is both timely and urgent. Such research would offer valuable insights for developing education policies and parenting strategies more responsive to the challenges of the digital era.

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