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SOCIALIZATION OF THE CHILD IN THE DIGITAL SOCIETY

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ABSTRACT

Childhood is considered one of the most important stages that a human being goes through, as it is the foundation upon which their personality is built in all aspects. During this stage, the child experiences four main interconnected patterns, namely physiological, cognitive, psychological, emotional, and social development. With the emergence of the internet and the significant impacts it has had on all societies worldwide, these effects have extended to all age groups without exception. However, among the groups most affected by this advanced means of communication are children, who find themselves surrounded by a global network that provides them with everything they need, including programs, applications, electronic games, as well as information they use to complete their assignments and school research. On the other hand, there is a group of children who misuse this digital technology, which has caused them negative effects on their psychological, physical, and behavioral health. Despite this, social actors strive to find social, legal, and technical methods in order to reduce these negative effects of the internet on children.

KEYWORDS

Socialization, Family, Child, Internet, Digital Society

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Introduction:

The world is witnessing a rapid transformation in digital technologies, and this development has significantly affected the family in the first place. This impact is evident in the change in parental roles, as well as in the differences in socialization between previous (traditional) generations and contemporary generations, or what is called the digital generation. Technology plays a major role in the process of family socialization within society. If we refer to previous studies published in various fields, we find a shared view among specialists and analysts of family relations regarding the existence of a social gap between family socialization in the traditional generation and the digital generation. It is also observed that the information revolution has affected family bonds, barriers, and protective shields. Global reports have pointed to this issue, such as the Kaiser Educational Foundation (2010), which indicated that children between the ages of 8 and 18 spend no less than nine and a half hours per day in front of electronic screens throughout the week. During this time, their activities vary between writing messages, uploading video clips on YouTube, and other activities, which leads to exhaustion, nervous numbness, psychological frustration, and emotional lethargy. All this occurs before the eyes of parents who are occupied with their social duties throughout the day. On the other hand, there is awareness among many families in the digital society of the risks resulting from excessive use of technology transmitted through electronic media related to the internet, especially after observing aggressive behaviors among their children and a decline in concentration levels, which has affected their grades or academic achievement. Therefore, it has become necessary and imperative to reconsider the advantages and disadvantages of employing technology in general in children's daily lives.

1. Research Problem:

As soon as a child is born and enters life, they are received by two individuals who represent their world and its features—not only their external world but also their essence and human substance. Everything this small and weak being needs, especially in the first two years of life, is acquired through human interactions and exploration of the surrounding environment. Parents provide the necessary protection and surround the child with a form of special care against external dangers. However, with society's entry into modern technology—particularly the digital transformations that have affected the world in recent decades—there has been a direct impact on children's socialization. Socialization is based on the transmission of societal culture and the regulation of behavior in a way that ensures the individual's integration into their social environment.

Nevertheless, the digital transformations experienced by contemporary society have compelled the family to reconsider its educational methods, especially in light of the wide openness to the digital space and the remarkable development of the internet, which has penetrated both the family and individual spheres. It has become integrated with the individual's cultural identity to the extent that preventing children from using it has become difficult, if not impossible, as it has turned into a social and educational necessity. In the digital context, the child no longer receives social influence solely from the family and school but is also exposed daily to diverse content through the internet and social media. This influence has created a challenge for the family, which is no longer only required to instill values but also to guide children on how to consciously deal with digital content.

This leads us to pose the main question: Does the socialization of the child contribute to controlling their behaviors in the digital society?

2. Study Hypothesis:

The better the child's socialization (supervision), the better the control over their behaviors in the digital society.

3. Definition of Concepts:

A- The Family: The family represents a primary social group characterized by strong bonds and direct interaction, within which the individual acquires the fundamental values, norms, and attitudes that enable integration into society (Ghith, 2000, p. 45). It is also considered a social unit that performs the function of socialization by transmitting culture and prevailing norms from one generation to another (Wafi, 2003, p. 18).

b- Child: Definitions of the concept of the child vary according to disciplines, perspectives, and the nature of studies on this topic. Psychologists consider the child as the stage from the end of infancy to puberty, while legal professionals define a child as any person who has not reached the age of eighteen (Bayoussef Massouda, 2016, p. 440). Al-Zahrawi Abdelhadi defined the child as a being born with certain organic and physiological characteristics, having biological and psychological needs, and living within a social environment that is indispensable, requiring them to learn how to adapt to it in order to satisfy their psychological and social needs (Maatouk Jamal, 2016, p. 102).

c- Socialization: Since the family is the group in which the child finds themselves at birth, it is also the first school that imparts to the child all the knowledge, skills, orientations, and prevailing values in society. These are translated into practical methods of socialization that correspond to the cultural specificity of the society on the one hand, and to the requirements of the family and its particular social environment on the other. In addition, it provides the child with knowledge and skills that facilitate the management of their private and public life. Therefore, researchers in the field of socialization, despite differences in their theoretical frameworks, agree that family experiences—especially in early childhood—play a prominent and central role in building the child's personality and their psychosocial development (Imad Ben Trouch, 2017, p. 49).

d- Society: Society has been described by sociologists as the largest group to which individuals can belong. It has the ability to adapt by itself and to be adaptive in a way that ensures its continuity indefinitely. It is difficult to draw fixed and definite boundaries for any given society, as these boundaries change and differ according to circumstances and depending on the purposes for which they are defined (Mohamed Mahmoud Al-Johari, 2015, p. 32).

e- Digital Society: The digital society is one that relies primarily in its development on digital information, computers, and telecommunication networks; that is, it depends on what some call intellectual technology (Nariman Ismail Metwally, 1995, pp. 27–28). It is also defined as a society in which information is handled in digital form through communication means that allow direct and complete access to information, whether in a commercial or material form (Ahmed Hussein Bakr Al-Masri, 2008, p. 4).

4- Theoretical Approach: The functional perspective is based on a fundamental assumption centered on the idea of the integration of parts into a whole and the interdependence among the different elements of society. It views society as a system composed of a number of interconnected parts and is concerned with studying the relationship between these parts and society as a whole. The family performs several specific social functions, such as socialization, child care, and the satisfaction of individuals' needs (Ibrahim Talaat Lotfi, Kamal Abdelhamid Al-Zayat, 2012, pp. 77–79). It also focuses clearly on how the family establishes its children, instills in them their social roles, trains them on the conditions and obligations of the division of labor system, and encourages them to build cooperative relationships among themselves and within their occupational system, in addition to its concern with the role of the family in developing the personality of its children (Mouna Zaimia, 2013, p. 22).

There are also social and psychological theoretical trends that have addressed and interpreted family socialization. The symbolic interactionist approach is considered one of the most widely used approaches in the study of the family within the field of family sociology. This approach focuses on studying the relationships between husband and wife and between parents and children, viewing the family as a unit of interacting personalities. Symbolic interactionism explains the family through processes of interaction, which consist of role performance, status relationships, communication problems, decision-making processes, and socialization processes (Gouda Aziz, 2016, p. 12).

5- Method and Tools

A- Study Population: This study was conducted on a group of parents of fifth-grade primary school pupils from the El Ikhwa Aouali Primary School in Bouira Province.

B- Study Sample: The research population consists of 60 fifth-grade primary school pupils. A questionnaire was administered to a sample of 30 participants.

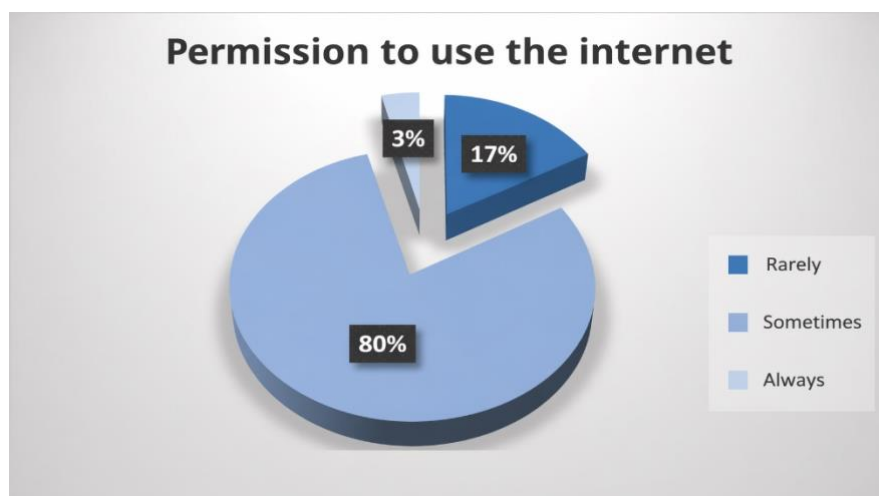
C- Data Collection Tools: In this field study, the questionnaire was used as the primary data collection tool. It was considered the most appropriate instrument for measuring parents' attitudes toward their children's Internet use and the type of parental control they apply in this context.

Results and Discussion:

Permission for children to use the internet

Table 1. Represents the percentage of parents allowing their children to use the internet

Percentages	Frequency	Degree of Permission
16.7	24	Rarely
80.0	5	Sometimes
3.3	1	Always
100.0	30	Total



Choosing the Appropriate Time for Internet Browsing

Table 2. Represents the time chosen by parents for their children when browsing the internet

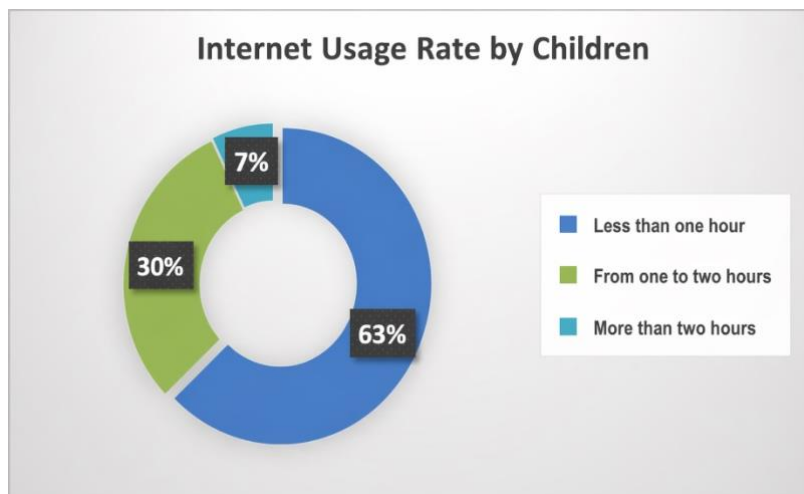
Percentages	Frequency	Time Selection
6.7	2	Rarely
13.3	4	Sometimes
80.0	24	Always
100.0	30	Total

Analysis: The results show that a very large percentage of parents (80%) always set appropriate times for internet use, compared to only 13.3% who do so sometimes, and 6.7% who do so rarely.



Table 3. Internet Usage Rate by Children

Usage Rate	Frequency	Percentage
Less than one hour	19	63.3%
From one to two hours	9	30.0%
More than two hours	2	6.7%
Total	30	100.0%

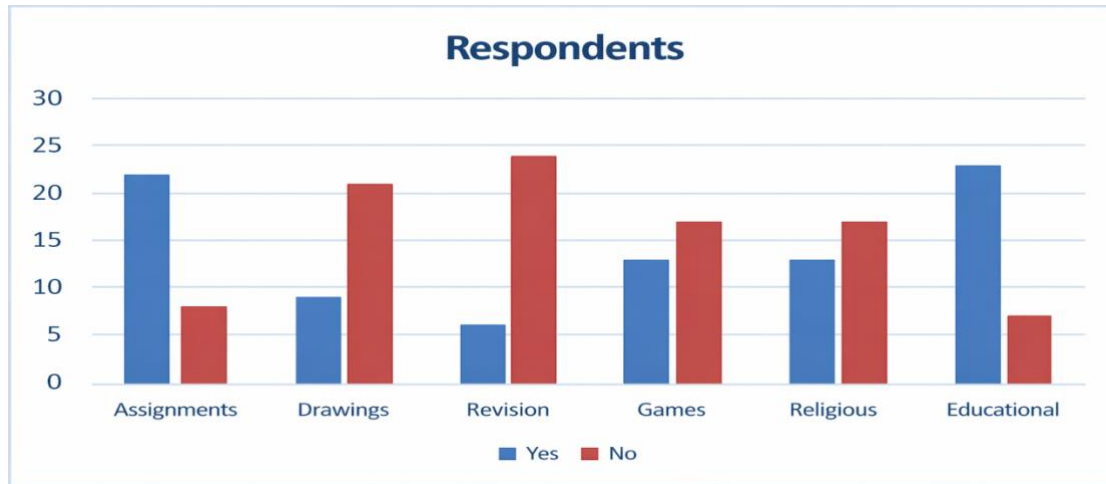


Analysis: The results show that the majority of children (63.3%) use the internet for less than one hour daily, while 30% use it for one to two hours, and a very small percentage (6.7%) exceed two hours.

Contents Used for Internet Browsing

Table 4. Represents the content that children seek when using the internet

Duties	Drawings	Reading	Games	Religious	Educational	Content
22	9	6	13	13	23	Yes
8	21	24	17	17	7	No
30	30	30	30	30	30	Total



Analysis:

The results show that the majority of children use the internet for educational purposes, where 76.7% follow educational content, and 73.3% use it to complete school assignments. These high percentages reflect that the internet has become an essential tool in supporting learning and acquiring knowledge, which is a positive indicator of guiding children toward beneficial use.

In contrast, 43.3% of children use the internet for games, which represents a moderate percentage reflecting a natural recreational aspect in children's lives, without dominating educational use. The same percentage (43.3%) also follows religious content, indicating the presence of value-based and cultural guidance from the family.

As for cartoons, the percentage is only 30%, while digital reading remains low (20%). This suggests that children do not rely heavily on the internet for reading, but rather focus more on interactive or academic content.

Accompanying Children While Using the Internet

Table 5. Represents the extent to which parents accompany their children when using the internet

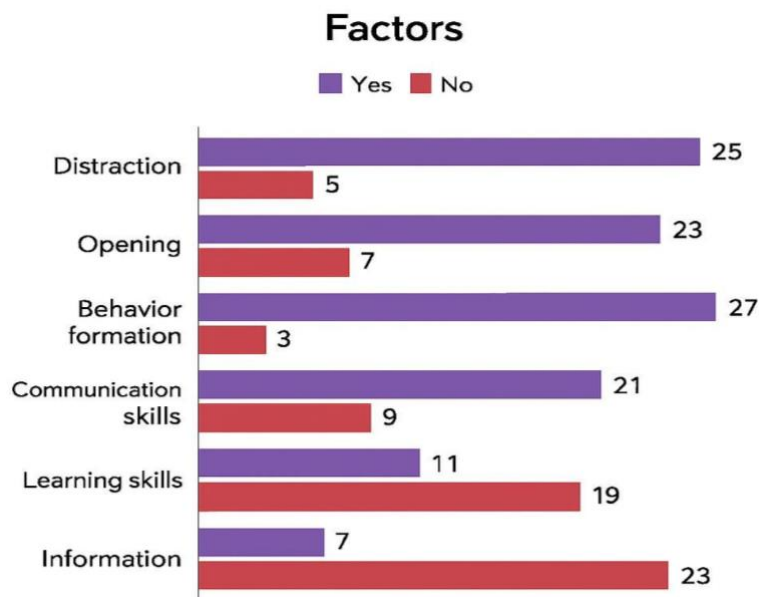
Percentages	Frequency	Accompaniment
0.0	0	Rarely
40.0	12	Sometimes
60.0	18	Always
100.0	30	Total



Analysis: The results show that a significant proportion of parents (60%) always supervise their children whilst they are using the internet, whilst 40% supervise them occasionally, with no parents at all (0%) supervising them only rarely.

Table 6. Factors that motivate parents to provide internet access for their children

Factors and reasons for providing internet access to children						
Factors	Learning Skills	Communication Skills	Behavior Formation	Openness	Filling Free Time	Information
Yes	19	9	3	7	5	23
No	11	21	27	23	25	7
Total	30	30	30	30	30	30

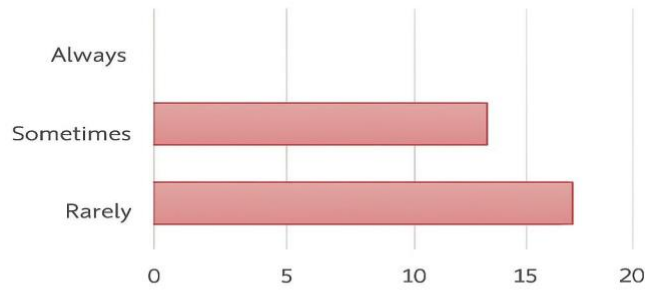


Analysis:

From the table, it can be observed that the majority of parents (76.7%) provide Internet access for obtaining information, and 63.3% for enhancing learning skills. This reflects that the main motivation is the child’s cognitive development and educational benefit. In contrast, lower percentages for factors such as communication skills (30%), openness (23.3%), free time filling (16.7%), and behavior formation (10%) indicate that social or behavioral motivations are less influential.

Table 7. Degree of Parents Allowing Their Children to Download Applications and Programs

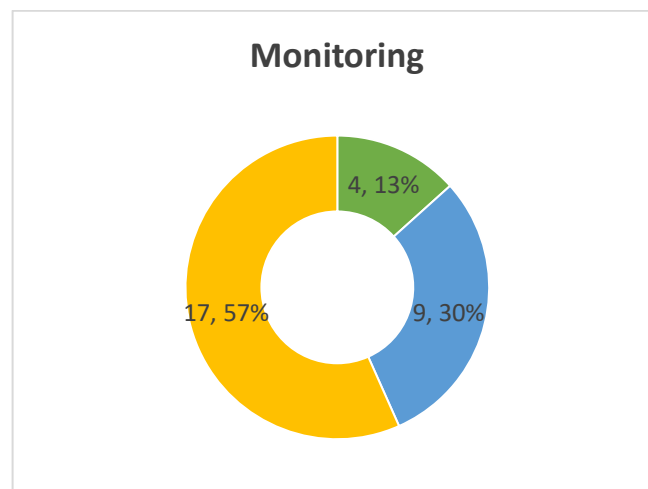
Allowing Downloading Applications	Frequency	Percentage
Rarely	16	53.3%
Sometimes	14	46.7%
Always	0	0.0%
Total	30	100.0%

Downloading Programs**Analysis:**

The results indicate that most children (53.3%) are rarely allowed to download applications and programs, while 46.7% are sometimes allowed to do so. No children are always permitted to download applications, which suggests a generally cautious parental attitude toward controlling children's digital activities and limiting unrestricted access to applications.

Table 8. Extent of Parents' Use of Electronic Monitoring Services to Supervise Their Children

Monitoring via Electronic Control Services	Frequency	Percentage
Rarely	4	13.3%
Sometimes	9	30.0%
Always	17	56.7%
Total	30	100.0%

**Analysis:**

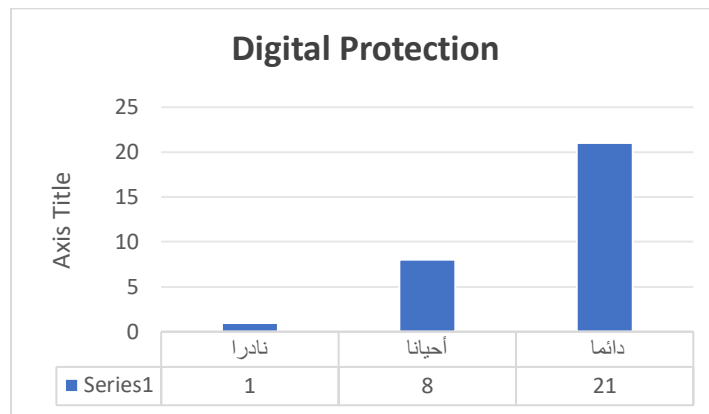
The results indicate that the majority of children (56.7%) are constantly monitored using electronic monitoring tools, while 30% are sometimes monitored, and only 13.3% are rarely supervised.

Table 9. Parents' Opinion on Parental Control Services in Protecting Children

Digital Protection (Parental Control)	Frequency	Percentage
Rarely	1	3.3%
Sometimes	8	26.7%
Always	21	70.0%
Total	30	100.0%

Analysis:

The results show that the majority of parents (70.0%) believe that parental control services always help in protecting children while browsing the Internet. Meanwhile, 26.7% think that these services are sometimes effective, and only 3.3% consider them rarely effective. These findings indicate a strong positive perception among parents regarding the importance and effectiveness of digital parental control tools in ensuring children's online safety.



Analysis:

The results indicate that the majority of parents (70%) believe that digital monitoring tools provide continuous and effective protection for the child, while 26.7% consider them effective only sometimes, and a very small proportion (3.3%) doubt their effectiveness.

Table 10. Suggested Solutions for Parents to Support Children's Socialization

Solutions / Mechanisms	Yes (Frequency)	No (Frequency)
Developing skills / Skill development	5	25
Child participation / Involving the child	12	18
Discussion / Dialogue	14	16
Parental supervision / Parental control	17	13
Deterrence / Restriction	4	26
Sports practice / Physical activities	24	6
Total	30	30



Analysis:

Sports practice (80%) is considered the most adopted solution, reflecting families' awareness of the importance of engaging children in healthy physical activities as a way to reduce Internet dependency.

Parental supervision (56.7%), discussion with the child (46.7%), and participation (40%) are mechanisms based on guidance and accompaniment, which enhance the sense of security and teach children responsible Internet use.

In contrast, deterrence (13.3%) and skill development (16.7%) are less adopted, indicating that families tend to rely more on positive approaches based on support and guidance rather than direct punishment.

Conclusions:

Based on the results of the tables, it becomes clear that parents' behavior toward children's Internet use is characterized by a certain balance between permission and control. On one hand, most parents allow Internet use in a non-continuous manner (sometimes), which reflects an awareness of the importance of avoiding excessive use and preventing early digital addiction.

On the other hand, there is a clear presence of what is known in psychology as family regulation (parental control), where a large proportion of parents:

- set usage time limits
- accompany the child during browsing
- apply continuous monitoring

This indicates the adoption of a guided parenting style, which combines controlled freedom with supervision, and is considered one of the most balanced approaches in child upbringing.

The results also reveal that the main reasons for providing Internet access are educational and cognitive motivations (information and learning). This reflects parents' positive perception of the Internet as a tool for developing children's abilities rather than merely a source of entertainment.

At the same time, the findings show a degree of psychological caution among parents, reflected in:

- limiting permission to download applications
- strong reliance on monitoring systems
- belief in the effectiveness of digital protection

This demonstrates an implicit awareness of digital risks such as addiction, inappropriate content, and social isolation.

Regarding solutions, parents tend to prefer positive alternative strategies such as:

- sports activities
- dialogue and discussion
- child participation during Internet use

This indicates a shift toward psychological and behavioral guidance rather than strict punishment or deterrence. Overall, parents adopt an educational approach based on balancing Internet benefits with protection from its risks, relying significantly on parental supervision and guidance, which reflects a good level of digital and educational awareness.

Recommendations:

1. Strengthen digital awareness among parents through guidance programs that help them understand online risks and modern protection methods.
2. Promote balanced (aware) supervision instead of strict control by combining monitoring with trust-building to encourage responsible use.
3. Encourage family dialogue, as continuous communication helps children express their digital experiences and avoid risks.
4. Set clear and consistent screen-time rules to prevent addiction and ensure balance between digital and daily activities.
5. Direct children toward educational use by selecting beneficial applications and content that support learning and skill development.
6. Promote alternative activities such as sports, hobbies, and social engagement to reduce Internet dependency.
7. Teach children self-protection skills, such as not sharing personal information and interacting cautiously with strangers online.

Conclusion:

Contemporary life conditions, accompanied by major technological and economic transformations, have significantly affected both individual and family levels within society. The family, like other social structures, has been influenced by these changes, and traditional upbringing patterns are no longer fully accepted by modern generations.

The issue of socialization has been widely studied by various intellectual schools, both classical and modern, due to the crucial role of the family in child upbringing, especially in the modern family that has been strongly impacted by advanced technologies.

Today, modern society is often referred to as a “digital society,” where individuals have become digital users highly dependent on the Internet and virtual communication.

This study highlights the issue of children’s socialization in the digital society, along with the challenges faced by families in balancing traditional values and modern technological demands. It represents a major challenge for parents in finding a balance between authenticity and modernity while raising their children in the digital age.

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