



RESEARCH ARTICLE

# The Digital Family Culture and Its Influence on Child Electronic Guidance: A Case Study of Selected Families

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**ABSTRACT**

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The family has long served as the fundamental cornerstone of social development, responsible for nurturing the child's character and steering them towards constructive behaviors that foster the acquisition of knowledge and skills beneficial not only to the family unit but also to the wider community. However, in the face of rapid technological advancements, the family is confronted with new challenges, necessitating a redoubling of its efforts in the realm of education to avoid lagging behind in a rapidly evolving societal landscape. The modern world has become an interconnected space without boundaries, and any notion of a family shielded from the encroachment of the digital realm, maintaining its temporal and spatial isolation, fails to grasp the profound impact of digital development on society. Observing the reality of the family, one can discern that children have outpaced their parents in embracing technology and navigating digital realms, prompting parents to acquaint themselves with digital culture in order to effectively engage with and support their children. Bridging the digital divide between parents and children becomes increasingly crucial, as a widening gap hampers the socialization process. Digital concepts have given rise to new norms, behaviors, and methods of interaction, rendering the child's behavior intrinsically digital. Consequently, families must embrace this new digital culture and delve into its intricacies amidst the rapid growth of digital technologies. This study aims to identify key aspects of family digital culture and elucidate its potential to facilitate positive guidance and optimal utilization of digital spaces for children.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

"In the current era of rapid technological advancement, electronic spaces have pervaded the lives of children, capturing their utmost attention and engagement. This reality has become ubiquitous across families of diverse backgrounds and affiliations, wherein some may find it challenging to disengage their children from these digital realms, leading them to adapt to this new paradigm rather than confront it.

Rather than remaining entrenched in resistance, families should seek to familiarize themselves with electronic spaces, decipher their intricacies, and harness their potential benefits. In this context, the cultivation of a digital family culture assumes a pivotal role in keeping pace with the unprecedented growth of electronic spaces. A profound understanding of technology, particularly among parents, empowers them to effectively guide their children's usage of these technological means, ensuring that they reap the myriad advantages while developing their skills and knowledge in a fruitful and constructive manner. Conversely, a significant discrepancy between the digital acumen of the child and that of the family may lead to adverse outcomes.

Central to our inquiry is the question:

- How does the digital culture of the family contribute to guiding the child's electronic engagement?

The primary hypothesis of this study asserts:

- The digital culture of the family significantly influences the child's electronic behavior.

Sub-study hypotheses are as follows:

- The family's utilization of electronic media encourages the child's usage.
- The family's awareness and appropriate use of electronic means enable the child to adopt responsible practices.
- The family's comprehension of the child's electronic interests fosters the development of their digital skills.

This research pursues several objectives:

1. To identify the key indicators of the digital culture within families.
2. To explore the role played by the family's digital culture in shaping children's judicious technology use.
3. To underscore the importance of digital culture among parents and emphasize its acquisition as a necessity."

## First - study concepts

### 1. Digital culture

The notion of culture is a dynamic concept that evolves in tandem with societal transformations. As societies progress, new cultural paradigms emerge, often intertwined with technological advancements, exemplified by the emergence of concepts associated with digital and technological spaces. Presently, there is a pressing discourse surrounding a novel form of culture known as electronic or digital culture, which has assumed significance as a key metric for gauging development, be it at the institutional or individual level.

The International Society for Educational Technology defines educational technology as "an interactive system of strategies, knowledge, skills, standards, rules, controls, ideas, and principles followed in the optimal use and values of digital technologies and their investment in a smart and safe manner by controlling access to digital content and its production through equivalent availability processes oriented towards the benefits of modern technologies and protection from risks and promotions." <sup>1</sup>

Similar definition: "Digital culture represents a phrase that pertains to cultural changes caused by the development and dissemination of technologies, particularly the Internet and the World Wide Web." <sup>2</sup>

Electronic culture is also defined as learning and being up to date on everything new in the digital area, particularly those digital outputs that play an essential role in education and skill development, whether in the form of electronic games or instructional software. Electronic culture also includes an understanding of all the risks and drawbacks of electronic products.

### 2. Guiding the child

Guidance is a word taken from the verb to guide, and to direct something in the sense of turning it to a certain point<sup>1</sup>. Idiomatically, guidance can be described as "the organized process that aims to help the individual choose the appropriate solution to the problem that he suffers from, develop plans that lead to this solution, and adapt according to the new situation."

The goal of this support is to make the individual happy and satisfied while also giving them the freedom to select based on their interests, desires, and abilities.<sup>3</sup>

Considering the emotional and psychological aspect of individuals constitutes a critical foundation for effective guidance. Guiding individuals is not a mechanistic process aimed at mere physical direction; rather, it should be a desirable and congruent endeavor, aligned with the individual's readiness and preferences. This aspect gains heightened significance, particularly in the context of children, especially during the developmental phase when they begin to perceive the external world. During this period, children tend to seek a certain degree of autonomy in their behavior while concurrently forming strong attachments to various objects and experiences. At this juncture, the role of the mentor (e.g., the father, the mother) becomes paramount, and their skill lies in adeptly managing guidance while respecting the child's preferences.

**Second, the methodological procedures of the study**

**2.1 Temporal limits of the study**

The research was carried out between May 15 and June 25, 2023.

**2.2 Study sample**

The researcher employed purposive sampling, which comprised a group of families with children, specifically targeting families of university professors. A total of 70 university professors, representing both genders, were selected from diverse universities across the country, including EL Ouali Biskra, and Skikda. Additionally, the electronic questionnaire was shared with two professors from Yemen and Saudi Arabia. Out of the 70 participants contacted, the researcher received 50 responses to the electronic questionnaire.

**2.3 Study methodology**

The present study adopted an exploratory descriptive approach, characterized by its focus on investigating the phenomenon as it naturally exists in reality. This approach is primarily concerned with providing an accurate and comprehensive description of the phenomenon, using both quantitative and qualitative means of expression. "4

The electronic questionnaire was the primary tool utilized in the study: "It is a tool for collecting data from virtual contexts in which the researcher designs his form and places it on one of the social networks, and the researcher sends the link to individuals via the network or their e-mail, while the participant responds to that particular site or e-mail specified by the researcher." 5

According to Fadil Dalio, an electronic questionnaire is any type of self-completed questionnaire in which the responder provides information via the Internet using an electronic device that satisfies the goal.6

**Third - the results of the study and discussion of hypotheses**

**3.1 Results of the first hypothesis:** The family's use of electronic media encourages the child to use it

**Table 1: The ability to use electronic means according to the gender variable**

Gender	Yes		no		the total
	T	%	T	%	
male	20	40	3	6	100
feminine	18	36	9	18	
the total	38	76	12	24	
	50				

**Table 2: Allowing children to use smart devices**

alternatives	Repetition	%
Yes	43	86
no	7	14
the total	50	100

The data presented in Tables 01 and 02 indicate a positive correlation between parents' utilization of technological means and children's usage. This relationship is expected, considering the influence children wield over the overall family atmosphere and their tendency to adopt behaviors through imitation.

**Table 3: Children and private accounts in electronic media**

alternative	Repetition	%
Yes	44	88
no	6	12
the total	50	100

Table 03 reveals that the highest percentage is attributed to children owning private accounts. Nonetheless, based on the guardians' statements, it is noteworthy that the majority of these accounts are supervised through the email of either the father or mother, particularly when the child falls within the age bracket of 8 to 12 years. This precaution is taken due to the child's limited awareness of account usage terms and security measures.

**Table 4: The digital media known and used by parents and children**

	Parents	Children
<b>known media</b>	Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Messenger, WhatsApp, Telegram.	Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok, YouTube, gaming applications, Viber, imo
<b>media used</b>	Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp, Telegram	Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok, YouTube, gaming applications, Viber, imo

Table 04 illustrates that there is a certain degree of variation in the media known and utilized by parents and their children, contingent upon individual interests. Furthermore, children tend to exhibit a greater alignment with the latest trends in digital media, displaying a particular attraction towards multi-media platforms that encompass a blend of images, sounds, videos, and diverse effects. These multi-media platforms are especially favored by children and even young individuals.

However, it is important to acknowledge that the information presented in Table 04 is based on the declarations provided by the guardians. It is plausible that there may exist other media means that their children employ, unbeknownst to them.

**3.2 Results of the second hypothesis:** The family's awareness of the use of electronic means and means enables the child to use them well.

**Table 5: The areas of use of technological means by parents and children**

Children	Parents
Play, learn, communicate, learn by playing	Work, communication, multiple interests

The observed disparities in media usage patterns between adults and children can be attributed to variations in interests and the considerable age gap between parents and their children. Furthermore, it is worth noting that the research sample consists of university professors, whose profession necessitates extensive utilization of these media, particularly in the current era where digitization has pervaded all facets of their work. As a result, the sample of university professors might inherently exhibit higher levels of media engagement compared to the younger children within their families, whose interests and usage habits differ.

**Table 6: Parents' interaction with social media**

Statement	T	%
Interact with everything published by rejecting, endorsing or commenting	35	70
See what's new without interaction	15	30
the total	50	100

Engaging with content published via digital media serves as a crucial indicator of digital culture. Considering the social and cognitive significance of the study sample, it possesses the qualifications to act as an influential and active entity concerning the circulation of information across various digital media platforms.

**Table 7: Parents' knowledge of the terms of use and security of digital accounts**

Statement	Yes	no	the total
You have knowledge of the terms of use and security of digital accounts	33	17	50
	66%	34%	100

Acquiring knowledge about what content to publish, how to publish it, and understanding the principles of personal and intellectual ownership concerning online accounts are among the key indicators of digital culture. Table No. 07 demonstrates that the majority of the study sample demonstrates awareness of the terms of use, with this awareness being closely connected to the level of knowledge and understanding exhibited by the participants comprising the study sample.

**Table 8: Parents' knowledge of the benefits and drawbacks of electronic applications and games**

Statement	Yes	no	the total
Do you have knowledge of various games and applications for children in terms of benefits and drawbacks?	24	26	50
	48 %	52 %	100

As depicted in Table No. 08, the percentages indicate a close proximity, with a significant portion of parents unaware of the games and applications that capture their children's interests. Notably, the study data reveals that mothers tend to possess more knowledge in this regard compared to fathers, which is to be expected as mothers generally spend more time accompanying and monitoring their children's activities.

**3.3 Results of the third hypothesis:** The family's knowledge of the child's electronic interests enables them to develop their digital skills

**Table 9: Data related to the third hypothesis**

The number	Phrase	Yes		no	
		T	%	T	%
01	Your son has skills in programming and digitization	40	80	10	20
02	You know your children's favorite digital spaces	30	60	20	40
03	Your children know about artificial intelligence and try to use it	45	90	5	10
04	It will support your son/daughter's digital tendencies	50	100	00	00

Source: designed by the researcher

As shown in Table 09, the majority of children have digital skills as a result of their upbringing in a world where electronic devices have become an intrinsic part of family life. In many cases, children outperform their parents in terms of knowledge of the digital environment, to the point where some parents find it difficult to keep up with their children's digital preferences, as illustrated in Phrase 02 of Table 09. Furthermore, as noted in Phrase 03, youngsters display a high awareness of the most recent innovations in the digital domain, as seen by their knowledge and use of artificial intelligence.

It additionally seems encouraging that the majority of the study participants stated a willingness to support their children's digital proclivities. This emphasizes the digital world's significant influence on the family as a whole, as well as the difficulties of completely removing a child from its clutches. As a result, rather than outright prevention, the approach is to provide assistance and advice.

**Fourth - Discussing the results of the study hypotheses:**

**4.2 Discussing the results of the first hypothesis:** the family's use of electronic media encourages the child to use it

Based on the findings of the investigation, it is reasonable to conclude that the first hypothesis was confirmed. There is a definite link between parents' involvement with and use of technology means and their children's digital activity. According to the findings of the first hypothesis, a considerable

majority of the youngsters in the sample have permission to use smart devices and have private profiles on various digital sites. Furthermore, some children may have social media accounts that their parents are unaware of or do not use.

The first indicator of digital culture is the usage of technology. "The computer or smartphone culture... is dependent on appreciating its significance as a future alternative to the notepad and pen... and overcoming the anxiety of dealing with numerous electronic devices and using them in various aspects of life..."<sup>7</sup>

The frequency with which children use electronic devices has been affected positively by their parents' passion for such items, as parents serve as important role models for their children. Rather than depending exclusively on verbal instructions, children tend to mimic the conduct they observe. As a result, it is critical for parents to be aware of this impact and capitalize on it by limiting their children's access to digital gadgets and emphasizing the necessity of good and balanced usage.

**4.2 Discussing the results of the second hypothesis:** the family's awareness of using electronic means and means enables the child to use them well

Simply using technology is insufficient to claim digital literacy for both parents and children. True digital literacy comprises a link between technology use and knowledge of electronic safety precautions, as well as an awareness of the many games and programs used by the child in the digital arena. To properly oversee and manage digital use, a family must actively connect with digital places and have the necessary skills to maintain electronic security.

The findings of the second hypothesis suggest that parents use media consciously, leveraging appropriate settings for their children, whether for play or education. They also make an effort to check the content for bad and positive features, as well as to protect their children technologically through remote monitoring via email. The awareness of digital use is the second most important indication of family digital culture. "Digital culture is entirely dependent on knowledge of electronic work and its many tools, which have permeated us and everything related to us now." It has evolved into one of the pillars of daily life work."<sup>8</sup>

Another factor that might serve as a foundation for the child's safety and protection from internet-related threats is the family's commitment to supporting the child's cognitive and moral growth. While preserving the security of virtual accounts is critical, it must be accompanied by the family's commitment to developing the child's cognitive and ethical development.

According to researcher Ghizan Sarah, achieving the child's digital security can be done by concentrating on three important factors. Acquiring knowledge and information about apps and digital technology falls under the cognitive element. The skill component entails being proficient with technology use. Last but not least, the behavioral component focuses on fostering ethics and values drawn from Arab-Islamic culture. This is the situation where "the family assumes a vital role in guiding the child's digital behavior in alignment with ethical values."<sup>9</sup>

**4.3 Discussing the results of the third hypothesis:** the family's knowledge of the child's electronic interests enables them to develop their digital skills

The child's behavior has changed to become increasingly digital-focused, which has prompted families to make attempts to fully understand the complexities of this digital environment. Parents are putting more focus on encouraging their kids' digital propensities. The findings of this hypothesis show that a sizable majority of parents recognized that their kids had digital abilities and were aware of and using artificial intelligence. It is now essential to be proficient in digital abilities, which calls for adaptation and knowledge of these recent technology developments.

Bakhit argued that: "Browsing on the Internet conveys a great cultural shift to the child, develops his positive skills, and helps him to know the reality around him."<sup>10</sup>

The process of acquiring abilities is a progressive one that starts with the child from early childhood and is neither instantaneous nor born at its time. The education of the child's options, respect for his preferences, and early training to improve his abilities and find his aptitudes are prerequisites for the child to become adept in the field of technology.

In this situation, the family is crucial. Axal Dufoux asserts that "the role of the educator has changed in the era of digitization, so his role is no longer limited or traditional but requires change and active participation in addition to guidance... which places a great responsibility on parents as a result of the increasing use of digital applications so that children can integrate digitally and participate digitally."<sup>11</sup>

Regardless of the social and cultural standing of the family, it is currently seen that children surpass their parents in the digital sphere. This presents a challenge that makes adopting a digital culture for the family a necessity rather than a choice.

## CONCLUSION

The family is the cornerstone of the social structure in which the process of developing attitudes and behaviors takes place, consequently, it needs to implement the process of socialization alongside its digital dimension as the initial with the goal of realizing the idea it holds prior to anything else. Additionally, as the digital current is growing and invading various spheres of life, the importance of digital culture is increasing day by day. Second, it's a good idea to use it because doing so will help members of the family deal with technology positively as they become more tech-savvy.

Among the most significant findings of this study are as follows:

1. A family that embraces a digital culture has the capacity to narrow the digital gap between parents and children.
2. Emphasizing the benefits of digital technology and encouraging children to invest in its usage are essential focal points.
3. Firmly addressing a child's digital behavior is a prerequisite within the digital culture framework.
4. Educating the child on making informed choices and honing their digital skills exemplify the advanced stages of the digital family culture.

The process of developing a digital-savvy child is heavily influenced by the overall environment in which the child is raised, starting from the family and extending to all social institutions. It is noteworthy that the education of digital behavior is not confined solely to the family; rather, it is an integral aspect of the broader social culture.

## FOOTNOTES AND LIST OF REFERENCES

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