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NAVIGATING THE DIGITAL AGE: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF HOW DIGITAL PARENTING IS STUDIED AND CONCEPTUALISED

Abstract
In an era increasingly shaped by digital technologies, understanding how parents navigate their roles in digitally mediated environments has become a critical area of inquiry (Benedetto et al., 2020; Modecki et al., 2022) Digital parenting, as a multidimensional construct influenced by technological, educational, and socio-cultural factors, has garnered growing scholarly attention (Livingstone et al., 2015; Mascheroni et al., 2018). This study aims to systematically examine how digital parenting is conceptualized in recent academic literature (2020–2024) and to map the methodological approaches that characterize this emerging field.
To address these aims, a systematic review was conducted in accordance with the PRISMA 2020 guidelines. The literature search was performed using the Web of Science database, resulting in the selection of 19 studies that were subjected to full-text analysis. Content analysis, supported by AI-assisted coding tools (Edwards et al., 2020) was employed to identify patterns in conceptual frameworks and methodological practices.
Findings reveal that digital parenting is a complex, context-sensitive practice that requires adaptive approaches, shaped by individual, relational, and cultural factors and informed by diverse methodological perspectives.
Theoretically, the study deepens the understanding of digital parenting by emphasizing relational dynamics and socio-cultural influences as core components of its conceptualization. Practically, the findings highlight the need for educational programs that enhance digital literacy, emotional attunement, and adaptive mediation among parents.

Keywords: digital parenting; systematic review; digital mediation

Intoduction

Digital transformation has profoundly reshaped our everyday life, extending its influence beyond public domains into personal and family spheres. For minors, the digital environment significantly shapes both their home life and educational experiences (Smahel et al., 2025). Notably, this is not an entirely new phenomenon—earlier technological innovations such as radio and television also sparked societal and educational debates (Ranschburg, 2006) similar to those surrounding today's internet, smart devices, andartificial intelligence(AI)-based tools (Kárpáti, 2013). Each emerging medium has promised social and educational benefits, while simultaneously raising parental concerns about children's exposure to inappropriate or harmful content (Wartella & Jennings, 2000). Although such concerns are longstanding, the rapid proliferation of digital technologies has intensified anxieties about their impact on

educational and learning processes (Modecki et al., 2022). For instance, prior research has linked excessive screen time to a range of negative outcomes, including lower academic performance, impaired cognitive development, and increased risks of obesity, addiction, and sleep disturbances (e.g., Wolf et al., 2018).

In this context, parental involvement plays a vital role in guiding and protecting minors as they navigate the digital landscape (Banić & Orehovački, 2024). The traditional role of parents is thus supplemented with responsibilities that emerge within digital spaces. Hence, digital education is a complex and evolving concept, encompassing both the mediation of digital media and the development of new, digitally-informed parenting practices (Mascheroni et al., 2018).

Given this shifting landscape, there is a growing need to better understand how digital parenting is conceptualized and how it is empirically studied across diverse contexts. Hence, this study contributes to that understanding by offering a systematic overview of recent scholarly approaches to digital parenting—both theoretical and methodological—providing timely insights to guide future studies and applications in today's digital landscape.

Theoretical background

The evolving role of digital parenting and educational challenges in the digital learning environment

Building on the profound transformations described earlier, the increasing complexity of the digital media environment—impacting both adults and minors—combined with the early adoption of digital technologies by young users, presents significant educational challenges for parents (Nikken & de Haan, 2015). Children often acquire digital competencies intuitively, frequently initiating shared digital experiences and even guiding their parents in using technology (Benedetto et al., 2020). This dynamic, known as reverse socialization, introduces both challenges and opportunities for parenting in the digital age (Grossbart et al., 2022).

Parental mediation approaches vary widely. While some studies assume a clear separation between the online lives of parents and minors (Choy et al., 2024), others highlight more integrated digital experiences, especially when parents and younger family members engage collaboratively in digital play (King et al., 2025). In such cases, mediation extends beyond mere restriction and support, encompassing active cooperation and co-engagement (Nichols & Selim, 2022). Importantly, households remain a foundational context for development, with prior research emphasizing its critical role in shaping both safe and risky online behaviours among minors (Terras & Ramsay, 2016).

Given these dynamics, digital parenting should be recognized not merely as a technological issue but as an essential dimension of supporting learning at home (Dennen et al., 2020). Parents' digital competence and mediation strategies—whether active, restrictive, or technical—directly shape minors' learning environments and influence their study motivation (Jing et al., 2025). In this expanded role, digital parenting extends

beyond traditional educational responsibilities to actively shaping and facilitating digital learning contexts (Choy et al., 2024).

Providing adequate parental support alongside informal learning is particularly crucial during the early stages of formal education. Hence, parental digital skills appear to be especially influential at this stage, with research suggesting that children in the early years of primary school engaged online when their caregivers demonstrate confidence and awareness in digital contexts (Pons-Salvador et al., 2022). Relatedly, online parenting interventions have demonstrated high effectiveness in enhancing parenting skills related to digital mediation, particularly for parents of young children. These programs offer considerable benefits in terms of time and resource efficiency, utilize visual information transfer techniques, and deliver practical support to parents navigating digital environments (Novianti et al., 2023). Altogether, digital parenting is not only shaped by technological access or parental attitudes, but also deeply embedded in broader educational and developmental processes—where parental digital competence plays a pivotal role in fostering safe, meaningful, and supportive online experiences for children (Christakis & Hale, 2025; Livingstone et al., 2015; Mascheroni et al., 2018).

Social and cultural factors influencing digital parenting

Building on the foundational role of parental mediation, existing literature emphasizes the substantial impact of cultural norms and socioeconomic conditions on how parents navigate and support their children's digital lives (Choy et al., 2024; Modecki et al., 2022). Research has increasingly called for parenting strategies that are culturally sensitive and responsive to diverse social realities, recognizing that digital mediation practices do not operate in a vacuum but are embedded within specific cultural and economic contexts (Livingstone et al., 2015; Smahel et al., 2025).

Parental approaches to digital engagement thus vary considerably across different societal structures, shaped by a complex interplay of values, resources, and expectations (Choy et al., 2024; Modecki et al., 2022; Smahel et al., 2020). While much of the existing scholarship has focused on European contexts (Livingstone et al., 2015), more recent contributions from Arabic-language research underscore a growing awareness of parents' pivotal role in digital education across other cultural landscapes as well (Saber' & Al-Shafey, 2024).

These findings collectively suggest that digital parenting must be understood through a broader lens—one that considers how cultural background and socioeconomic status influence both parenting practices and children's digital learning environments. Such contextual factors not only shape the forms of mediation parents adopt but also affect the development of digital competencies in children, as parenting values and resources often determine the extent and quality of young people's digital experiences (Lafton et al., 2024).

Relevance of the research

Research foci

The preceding literature review highlights the complexity of digital parenting, emphasizing its multifaceted role in mediating minors' interactions with digital technologies and shaping digital learning environments (Christakis & Hale, 2025; Livingstone et al., 2020; Mascheroni et al., 2018; Turner, 2020). Despite growing scholarly attention, there remains a need to clarify how digital parenting is understood shaping this emerging field. This study thus aims to systematically explore how *digital parenting* is conceptualised and framed in recent scholarly literature. It seeks to identify the key dimensions, perspectives through which digital parenthood is understood.

In parallel, the study seeks to examine the current methodological landscape of digital parenting research. It investigates dominant research designs, commonly used data collection methods, and the demographic groups most frequently represented in empirical studies published between 2020 and 2024. Building on key foundational reviews, this analysis aims to provide a concise yet updated overview of methodological trends in digital parenting research. Previously, Modecki et al. (2022) mapped the field by identifying a predominance of quantitative studies, alongside an increase in qualitative and mixed-method approaches. Other scholars have similarly emphasized methodological diversity, whether in evaluating the effectiveness of parental support programs (Novianti et al., 2023) or exploring parental mediation and involvement from both quantitative and qualitative perspectives (Banić & Orehovački, 2024; Nichols & Selim, 2022). Together, these studies reflect the field's evolving methodological landscape.

Emphasizing this dual focus, the overarching aim of the study is to enhance one's understanding of digital parenting through the integration of conceptual frameworks with empirical research methodologies. This comprehensive examination not only advances theoretical insights but also informs the design of future studies in the field. Through this combined focus on both conceptual and methodological dimensions, the review offers a thorough overview of current academic engagement with digital parenting.

Building on this comprehensive overview, the study addresses the following research questions:

1) How is digital parenting conceptualized and framed across the selected studies?

2) What characterizes the research landscape of the selected studies?
   - 2.1 Which methodological approaches are most commonly employed?
   - 2.2 What are the defining features of the selected quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods digital parenting research in terms of study design, data sources, and participant characteristics?

Applied research method

A systematic review was considered the most suitable approach for this study, as it aims to critically analyse existing literature on the conceptualization of digital parenting and the emerging methodologies used to study it.

To find relevant articles in the chosen databases, the researchers used the search terms:

”Digital Parenting” OR ”Online Parenting” OR ”Cyber Parenting” OR ”E-Parenting” OR ”Digital Age Parenting” OR ”Internet Parenting” OR ”Virtual Parenting” OR ”Parental Digital Guidance” OR ”Digital Literacy for Parents” OR ”Media Literacy for Parents”

This specific combination was selected because it helped to make the search clear and focused (as supported by Benedetto et al., 2020 and Modecki et al., 2022.). The process of screening articles and deciding which ones to include followed the PRISMA 2020 guidelines for systematic reviews (Page et al., 2021), particularly focusing on database and registry searches (as shown in Figure 1).

For this study, the researchers utilized Web of Science as their primary database. It was chosen due to its broad indexing of academic publications and their capacity to identify reputable, peer-reviewed research across various disciplines, including but not limited to education (e.g. Szabó et al, 2020). Their comprehensive coverage ensures the inclusion of high-quality scholarly work relevant to the research topic.

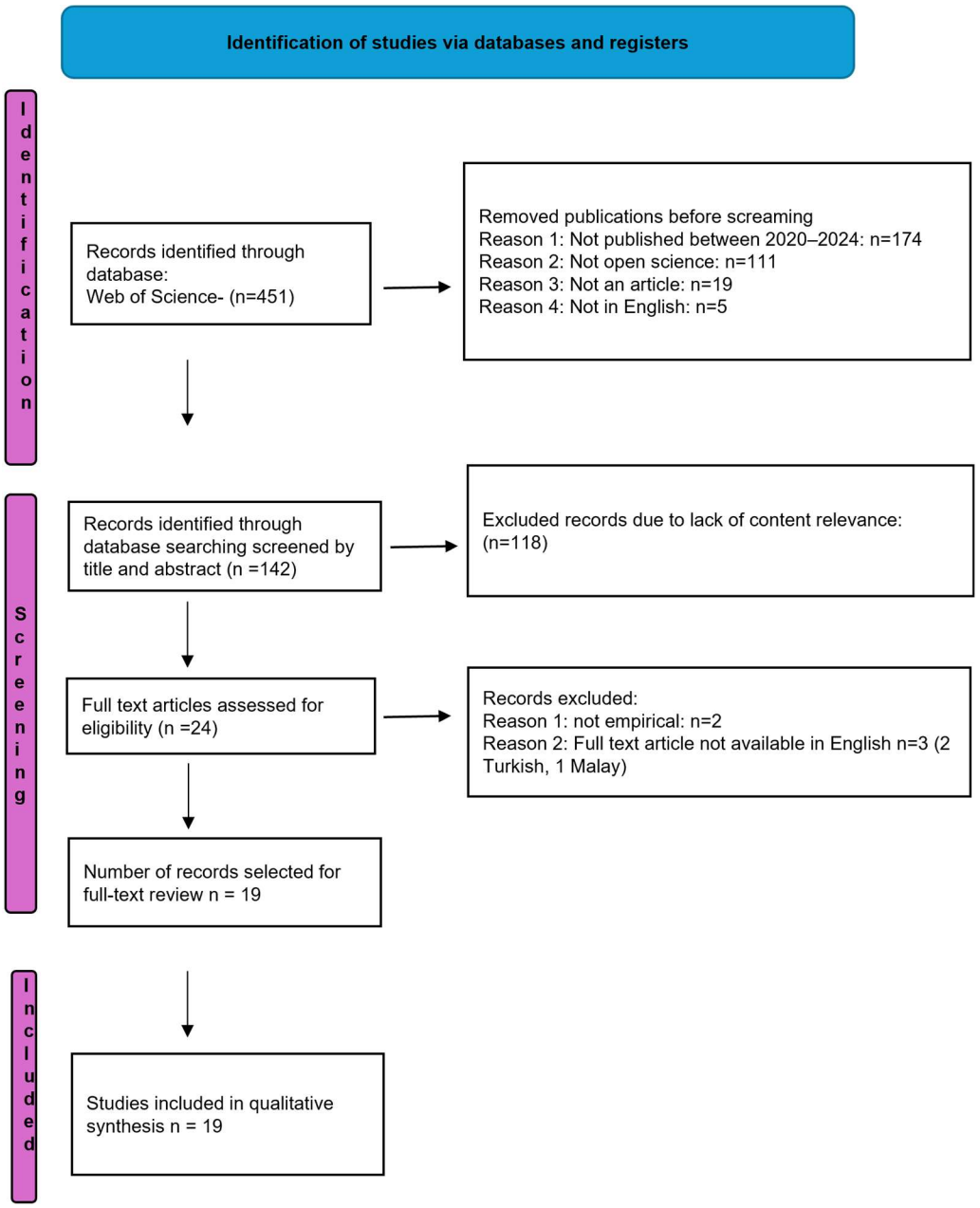
The initial identification phase yielded 451 records through a search of the Web of Science database. Following this, 142 records remained after an initial assessment, as 309 publications were removed before the formal screening process began. These pre-screening exclusions were based on several criteria: not being published between 2020 and 2024 (n=174), not being classified as Open Science (n=111), not being an article (n=19), and not being in English (n=5).

The remaining 142 records then underwent a more detailed screening process, where titles and abstracts were reviewed for relevance. This stage resulted in the exclusion of a significant number of records (n=118) due to a lack of content relevance to the research question.

Subsequently, 24 records progressed to the stage of full-text review. From these, a further 5 records were excluded after examining the complete text. The reasons for these exclusions were that two were not empirical research, and the full text of three articles was not available in English (two were in Turkish and one in Malay).

Ultimately, after rigorous screening phases, 19 records met the inclusion criteria, were selected for full-text review and were subsequently included in the final qualitative synthesis of the study. This systematic and multi-stage screening process ensured that only the most relevant and appropriate articles were included in the final analysis.

Figure 1. Identification and selection of studies



Source: Author's own data, adapted from PRISMA 2020 guidelines (Page et al., 2021)

Synthesis of Results

To synthesize the findings, we conducted content analysis (Dinçer, 2018) to identify and organize recurring patterns within the selected studies. The analysis proceeded in two key stages. First, we categorized the articles based on how they conceptualized digital parenting, highlighting the various themes, definitions, and frameworks employed. This allowed us to distinguish differing perspectives and theoretical orientations across the literature. In the second stage, we examined the methodological landscape of the studies, focusing on the research designs, data collection methods, and target populations. This two-step process enabled a comprehensive understanding of both the conceptual and empirical dimensions of digital parenting research.

In addition to manual coding, we integrated AI-assisted content analysis (Davison et al., 2024; Hamilton et al., 2023; Lee et al., 2024) to support and enhance our synthesis. Specifically, we employed generative AI tools, including Microsoft Copilot, to identify conceptual similarities across the dataset. To guide the AI's output, we used structured prompting strategy inspired by task-oriented prompt engineering approaches, where prompts were designed to articulate logical connections or thematic progressions across studies (cf. Wang et al, 2024) based on our research foci. This layered prompting approach enabled the AI to produce more coherent and analytically useful summaries. These AI-generated outputs served as a preliminary layer of abstraction, which was then critically reviewed and refined by two of the authors to ensure interpretative accuracy and conceptual coherence. Importantly, the final categorizations reflect human judgment, grounded in scholarly review, while benefiting from the efficiency and breadth afforded by AI augmentation.

Results

Conceptualisation of digital parenting among the selected studies

The concept of *digital parenting* has been explored extensively in recent literature, with various studies offering different perspectives on its definition and implementation. This subchapter aims to categorize digital parenting into four main conceptual groupings based on the analysis of 19 articles (see Appendix 1).

Firstly, digital parenting conceptualized through the lens of competence and awareness highlights the significance of digital literacy, technological proficiency, and risk awareness. Studies by Aydoğdu et al. (2024), Durualp et al. (2023), Fidan and Olur (2023), Öztürk and Şahin Sarıtaş (2023), Tosun and Mihci (2020), Kumas and Yildirim (2024), and Edwards et al. (2020) define digital parenting as a set of skills and knowledge that enable parents to guide, protect, and model behaviour for their children in digital environments. These studies highlight the need for parents to possess digital literacy, risk awareness, and role modelling capabilities.

Secondly, the findings highlight that parenting approaches in digital contexts encompass distinct parenting styles—authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive—as well as various mediation strategies, such as active, restrictive, and technical mediation. Studies by Aziz et al. (2022), Chemnad et al. (2023), Isikoglu et al. (2023), Jeffery (2024), Zhao et al. (2023), and Pratiwi et al. (2022) conceptualize digital parenting through the lens of behavioural regulation, communication, and interaction patterns between parents and children. These studies explore conflict, autonomy, and mediation effectiveness.

Thirdly, in conceptualising digital parenting, the findings underscore the value of educational and developmental support, particularly through educational guidance, training programs, and developmental initiatives aimed at enhancing parents' digital competencies. Studies by Mameli et al. (2025), Ramirez-Garcia and Aguaded-Gomez (2020), and Ponte et al. (2021) frame digital parenting as a developmental and educational responsibility. They emphasize the importance of structured training, self-determination theory, and preventive interventions to support both parents and children.

Lastly, the findings emphasize that conceptualizations of digital parenting are shaped by contextual and cultural influences, including cultural norms, socioeconomic conditions, and broader environmental factors that impact parenting practices in digital settings. Studies by Grane et al. (2023), Reginasari et al. (2021), and Türen and Bağçeli Kahraman (2024) explore how beliefs, cultural norms, economic capital, and family dynamics influence digital parenting strategies. These studies highlight the variability and adaptation in parenting approaches based on contextual factors.

In conclusion, this synthesis reveals that digital parenting is a multifaceted construct shaped by individual competencies, relational dynamics, educational frameworks, and sociocultural contexts. These findings underscore the importance of a holistic approach to digital parenting that integrates digital literacy, effective mediation strategies, educational support, and cultural sensitivity.

Applied research landscape of the investigated digital parenting research

This section synthesizes the findings from the included studies, categorized by their methodological approaches: applied research tools and the participating population. The overarching aim of this chapter is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the key elements regarding digital parenting based on the selected studies.

Table 2 outlines the diverse methodological approaches and key findings of the selected investigations (see Appendix 2). Notably, the majority of the included studies follow a quantitative approach (F=11). Additionally, these studies consistently emphasize that effective digital parenting is profoundly influenced by both technological competence and emotional engagement. For instance, Aydoğdu and Özaydın (2024) demonstrate the potential of AI-based tools to enhance parental skills through personalized support. In addition to that, Aziz et al. (2022) identify that authoritative parenting—marked by moderate control and open communication—reduces adolescent internet addiction. Chemnad et al. (2023) further emphasize the protective role of strong family bonds and supportive school environments. Similarly, Fidan et al. (2023) and Durualp et al. (2022) show that parental attitudes, digital self-efficacy, and socio-economic background significantly shape children's digital habits. Türen et al. (2025) and Zhao et al. (2023) underscore the impact of digital literacy and parental awareness on preventing digital game addiction and bridging digital divides.

Qualitative studies (F=6), as the second applied approach, reinforce these findings by emphasizing the importance of trust, empathy, and developmental sensitivity. For instance, Edwards et al. (2020) and Jeffery (2021) argue that restrictive strategies often lead to conflict, advocating instead for collaborative approaches tailored to children’s developmental stages. Reginasari et al. (2022) and Ramirez-Garcia et al. (2021) highlight the need for culturally sensitive and adaptive parenting strategies. Similarly, Isikoglu et al. (2023) contend that the digital society is not static, and therefore, parenting approaches should be shaped by children's evolving needs rather than a focus on restrictions. In line with this, Page Jeffery (2021) emphasizes the importance of dialogue between parents and adolescents, particularly in navigating conflicts, suggesting that open communication can serve as a foundation for more constructive and empathetic

parenting practices. Mixed-methods research (F=2) (e.g., Öztürk et al., 2023; Tosun & Mihci, 2020) bridges these perspectives, calling for comprehensive digital parenting education that integrates technical skills with traditional parenting values.

In sum, the findings indicate that successful digital parenting depends on emotionally supportive, autonomy-promoting, and context-sensitive strategies grounded in awareness, self-efficacy, and nuanced judgment (e.g., Mameli et al., 2024; Kumaş & Altındağ, 2024; Ponte et al., 2021).

Defining features of the selected quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods studies on digital parenting

Based on the data in Appendix 3, the selected quantitative studies demonstrate a methodologically coherent landscape, with clear documentation of study designs, data collection methods, and participant demographics—including both adult respondents and references to minors through parental reporting (see Appendix 3). The studies predominantly employ survey-based designs, with a strong emphasis on cross-sectional (e.g., Aziz et al., 2022; Chemnad et al., 2023; Türen & Bağçeli Kahraman, 2024) and correlational approaches (e.g., Fidan & Olur, 2023; Kumas & Yildirim, 2024; Zhao et al., 2023). These designs are well-suited for identifying associations between parenting practices and digital behaviours or outcomes in children and adolescents.

A wide range of standardized instruments is applied to assess digital parenting constructs. For instance, the Digital Parenting Attitude Scale (DPAS) and the Digital Parenting Self-Efficacy Scale (DPSS)— which measures parents' confidence in managing digital media use—appear frequently (e.g., Durualp et al., 2023; Fidan & Olur, 2023; Kumas & Yildirim, 2024). These tools reflect a trend toward validated, multidimensional instruments that capture both attitudinal and behavioural dimensions of digital parenting. Several studies also incorporate diagnostic and behavioural assessment tools. For example, Aziz et al. (2022) and Chemnad et al. (2023) use the Internet Addiction Diagnostic Questionnaire (IADQ) to assess problematic digital behaviours, while Aziz et al. (2022) further employ the Parental version of Young's Diagnostic Questionnaire (PYDQ) to evaluate adolescent internet addiction from the parental perspective. Chemnad et al. (2023) also utilize the Brief Family Relationship Scale (BFRS) and selected items from the WHO Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) survey to assess contextual family and school-related factors.

In terms of participant profiles, the studies span a broad demographic range. Most focus on parents of school-aged children (e.g., Durualp et al., 2023; Fidan & Olur, 2023), but some target special populations, such as parents of children with special needs (Kumas & Yildirim, 2024), preschool-aged children (Türen & Bağçeli Kahraman, 2024), or children under the age of 6 (Grané et al., 2023). Sample sizes vary widely—from small-scale developmental studies (e.g., Aydogdu et al., 2024, with 13 parents and 132 app testers) to large-scale secondary data analyses (e.g., Ponte et al., 2021, with 1404 children).

Overall, the emerging results illustrate a growing methodological sophistication in digital parenting research following a quantitative research approach, with increasing use

of validated scales, diverse populations, and multi-dimensional constructs to capture the complexity of parenting in the digital age.

Based on the data in Appendix 4, the selected qualitative studies on digital parenting also demonstrate a rich diversity in designs, data collection methods, and analytical strategies, reflecting the field's emphasis on contextual depth and participant experience. The table also highlights the range of participant demographics, including adults and parental references to minors, providing insight into how contextual depth and lived experiences are captured across different methodological orientations (see Appendix 4).

It was found that the selected studies employ a range of qualitative designs, including participatory approaches (Edwards et al., 2020; Jeffery, 2024) or case studies (Isikoglu et al., 2023; Pratiwi et al., 2022). These designs enable the exploration of implementation practices within real-world contexts and incorporate diverse stakeholder perspectives, enhancing the depth and relevance of findings (e.g., Hudon et al., 2021).

In terms of data collection, the included studies utilize a variety of tools tailored to their populations and contexts. For example, Edwards et al. (2020) integrate interviews, observations, diaries, child-centred interviews, and digital exemplars in a participatory design framework involving parents, children, educators, and industry partners. Similarly, Page Jeffery (2024) uses group discussions, scenario-based activities, post-it notes, whiteboard notes, and field notes to engage both parents and adolescents in co-constructing insights. Other studies, like Isikoglu et al. (2023), combine semi-structured interviews with parents, and a psychiatrist, home observations, and digital play diaries to capture nuanced family dynamics. Pratiwi et al. (2022) employ structured interviews via in-person meetings, video conferencing, and voice notes, while Reginasari et al. (2021) use open-ended surveys administered both online and offline.

Participant diversity is another important aspect of these studies. While some focus on small, in-depth samples (e.g., Isikoglu et al., 2023, with 9 parents and a child psychiatrist), others engage larger and more varied groups (e.g., Jeffery, 2024; Reginasari et al., 2021). Several studies include multi-stakeholder samples that combine parents, educators, and professionals—for instance, Edwards et al. (2020) involve both parents and industry partners, while Pratiwi et al. (2022) draw on university lecturers. Children and adolescents are also represented across age ranges, typically through parent reports—for example, 5–7-year-olds in Isikoglu et al. (2023) or 10–16-year-olds in Page Jeffery (2024). This range of participant types and sample sizes enhances the studies' capacity to reflect the complex realities of digital parenting.

Analytically, the studies apply robust qualitative methods. Content analysis is used in several studies (e.g., Edwards et al., 2020; Isikoglu et al., 2023; Ramirez-Garcia & Aguaded-Gomez, 2020), often incorporating triangulation of data, method, and investigator to enhance credibility. Thematic analysis is also widely applied (e.g., Page Jeffery, 2024; Pratiwi et al., 2022; Reginasari et al., 2021).

In summary, these qualitative studies were found to contribute richly to the digital parenting literature by offering context-sensitive, participant-driven insights grounded in methodological rigor and interpretive depth.

Based on Appendix 5, the two included digital parenting studies appear to employ distinct mixed-methods designs, analytical tools, and participant types, each carrying specific methodological implications (see Appendix 5).

The study by Tosun and Mihci (2020) employs a sequential explanatory design (Király et al., 2014), where the quantitative phase (a survey using the 12-item Digital Parenting Attitude Scale – DPAS – with 231 parents) is followed by a qualitative phase involving open-ended questions analyzed through content coding. The participant group also included children under the age of 6, represented indirectly through parent responses, offering early childhood insights into digital parenting contexts. This approach is particularly useful when researchers aim to explain surprising or nuanced results from the initial survey phase.

In contrast, Öztürk and Şahin Sarıtaş (2023) follow an exploratory sequential design (Király et al., 2014), beginning with qualitative semi-structured interviews (33 parents) followed by a quantitative survey (602 parents). They used the Scale of Conscious Use of Applications on Smart Devices (SCUASD), which aligns the survey instrument with prior qualitative insights. This approach is especially valuable when the research area lacks established measurement tools or theoretical frameworks.

Notably, both mixed-methods studies were found to reflect the integration of qualitative and quantitative methods in a sequential structure, but with opposite directions of sequencing—one explanatory, the other exploratory. These designs are employed to enhance the validity, depth, and applicability of the research findings of digital parenting by integrating the expansive scope of quantitative data—often involving larger participant samples—with the nuanced, contextual understanding derived from qualitative inquiry (Venkatesh et al., 2013).

Discussion

The aim of the study was to systematically explore how digital education is formulated and framed in the latest scientific literature. Furthermore, it sought to map the research environment of studies on digital education published between 2020 and 2024 by examining the dominant methodological approaches, frequently utilized data collection methods, and the most commonly represented populations. With a dual focus focusing on conceptual and methodological dimensions, the review aimed to provide a comprehensive view of current scientific research on digital education.

Our first research question addressed how digital parenthood is conceptualized within recent scholarly literature. Influential factors shaping the conceptualization of digital parenthood have shifted notably in recent scholarship; for instance, Benedetto and Ingrassia (2020) highlight a movement away from traditional parenting styles toward emphasizing parental mediation as central to managing children's digital lives. Expanding on this perspective, our review of 19 studies revealed four core dimensions through which digital parenthood is framed: (1) parenting styles and mediation strategies used to regulate and engage with children's digital activity; (2) parental digital competence and awareness, particularly concerning online risks and literacy; (3) the role of digital parenting in supporting children's educational and developmental pathways; and (4) the

broader contextual factors—such as cultural norms, socioeconomic status, and family dynamics—that shape parenting practices. These interconnected dimensions highlight the complexity of digital parenthood and underscore the importance of a comprehensive understanding that integrates behavioural, educational, and contextual perspectives.

Our second research question aimed to characterise the methodological landscape of the selected studies. Prior research has identified a strong preference for quantitative methods alongside growing qualitative and mixed-methods approaches (Modecki et al., 2022), further studies have reflected methodological diversity on parental support programs and mediation (e.g; Novianti et al., 2023; Banić & Orehovački, 2024; Nichols & Selim, 2022). Building on these foundations, our study offers a more focused and updated synthesis of the methodological approaches and data collection techniques prevalent in recent research. Our analysis also revealed a clear predominance of quantitative methodologies (F=11), complemented by a smaller but significant number of qualitative studies (F=6) and mixed-methods approaches (n=2).

Nevertheless, it was also found that quantitative research in this field is characterized by considerable methodological diversity. Specifically, many studies employed validated, multidimensional instruments designed to capture nuanced aspects of digital parenting. For example, tools such as the Digital Parenting Attitude Scale (DPAS) and the Digital Parenting Self-Efficacy Scale (DPSS) were frequently used to assess parental confidence and attitudes towards managing children's digital media use (Durualp et al., 2023; Fidan & Olur, 2023; Kumas & Yildirim, 2024). In addition, we observed that diagnostic and behavioural assessment tools also play a vital role in this body of research. Instruments like the Internet Addiction Diagnostic Questionnaire (IADQ) and the Parental version of Young's Diagnostic Questionnaire (PYDQ) have been utilized to identify and measure problematic internet behaviours (Aziz et al., 2022; Chemnad et al., 2023). Our review also highlighted the importance of contextual factors, which are frequently examined through standardized measures such as the Brief Family Relationship Scale (BFRS) and the WHO Health Behaviour in School-Age Children (HBSC) survey, allowing researchers to consider the broader family and social environments influencing digital parenting practices (Chemnad et al., 2023).

Our analysis also revealed notable methodological diversity within the qualitative studies examined. Researchers employed a wide range of approaches, including semi-structured interviews, observational techniques, and the use of game logs to capture parent-child digital interactions (Isikoglu et al., 2023). Other studies utilized thematic analysis of open-ended questionnaire responses (Reginasari et al., 2021) and structured interviews conducted remotely via video calls (Pratiwi et al., 2022). These variations demonstrate a flexible and context-sensitive application of qualitative methods in digital parenting research.

Among the two mixed-methods studies identified, distinct forms of methodological integration were observed. For example, Öztürk and Şahin Sarıtaş (2023) used qualitative interviews as a basis for developing a quantitative scale, whereas Tosun and Mihci (2020) combined the use of structured scales with qualitative content analysis of open-ended survey responses. These examples highlight the potential of mixed-methods designs to

deepen insights into digital parenting by bridging exploratory and confirmatory approaches.

Regarding target populations, it was revealed that the majority of studies focused on parents of school-aged children (e.g., Durualp et al., 2023; Fidan & Olur, 2023). However, it was also found that there is a growing emphasis on more specific groups, including parents of children with special educational needs (Kumas & Yildirim, 2024), as well as increasing attention to early childhood, with studies centered on preschoolers (Türen & Bağçeli Kahraman, 2024) and children under the age of six (Grané et al., 2023).

Sample sizes were also found to vary considerably across studies. Some research featured small-scale developmental designs, such as Aydoğdu et al. (2024), which involved 13 parents and 132 application testers, while others drew on large-scale datasets, such as Ponte et al. (2021), whose study encompassed over a thousand children. This variation reflects differing research aims and resource availability, further illustrating the methodological heterogeneity of the field.

By systematically mapping these methodological trends, populations, and tools, our study contributes an updated and comprehensive overview of the digital parenting research environment, highlighting areas of concentration as well as gaps that future research might address.

Further advancing the contribution of our study, its novelty lies in combining a conceptual mapping of digital parenthood with an in-depth analysis of the research methodologies employed in this field. This dual focus not only illuminates the diverse ways digital parenting is conceptualized but also highlights the evolving sophistication and variety of methodological approaches utilized in recent research. Notably, clear connection between how digital parenthood is understood and the methodological approaches applied emerges more distinctly when viewed across the reviewed studies. For instance, digital parenthood understood primarily as a set of competencies and awareness-related attributes—such as digital literacy, risk perception, and parental self-efficacy—is predominantly examined through quantitative approaches (Aydoğdu et al., 2024; Durualp et al., 2023; Fidan & Olur, 2023; Kumas & Yildirim, 2024). These studies often rely on surveys and standardized scales to capture measurable constructs, aligning well with quantitative methodologies. Conversely, investigations into the contextual and cultural dimensions of digital parenthood tend to employ qualitative or mixed-methods designs (Reginasari et al., 2021; Öztürk & Şahin Sarıtaş, 2023). Although some quantitative studies address these themes (Grané et al., 2023; Türen & Bağçeli Kahraman, 2024), the complex and nuanced nature of cultural and contextual factors frequently necessitates in-depth, interpretive approaches to fully understand their impact. This methodological diversity reflects the multidimensional character of digital parenthood and underscores the importance of selecting appropriate research designs to capture its varied aspects.

Conclusion

As digital technologies continue to reshape family life, understanding digital parenting has become an increasingly vital area of research with significant implications for children's development and well-being (Hammer et al., 2021; Kalkim et al., 2024; Lauricella et al., 2015)

This review has synthesized current knowledge on digital parenting, highlighting key trends, methodological patterns, and emerging research directions in an increasingly digitalized family context. Despite offering valuable insights, this systematic review nevertheless faces several limitations inherent in the current body of research on digital parenting. First, conceptual and terminological variability (Donovan et al., 2015) persists across studies concerning digital parenting, complicating the classification and synthesis of key concepts during content analysis. Second, the predominant reliance on self-reported data (Gorber et al., 2016)—especially from parents—introduces potential biases, which may compromise the validity of reported digital mediation practices. Furthermore, sample diversity is limited, with many studies drawing on convenience samples from homogenous populations (Sarker & AL-Muaalemi, 2022), thereby restricting the cultural and socio-economic generalizability of the findings. The widespread use of cross-sectional designs also limits the ability to track the evolution of parenting practices over time (Spector, 2019). Finally, despite the acknowledged importance of including more diverse voices and perspectives (Christakis & Hale, 2025), the underrepresentation of children's voices—particularly through direct data collection—reduces the depth and balance of the findings. This is because selected studies often foreground parental perspectives without adequately incorporating those of the children or adolescents affected by digital mediation strategies.

This study contributes to the understanding of digital parenting by integrating insights from education (Fidan & Olur, 2023; Kumas & Yildirim, 2024), psychology (e.g., Chemnad et al., 2023) sociology (e.g., Aziz et al., 2022), and media studies (e.g., Zhao et al., 2023). Future research could thus benefit from a more explicit interdisciplinary framework to deepen theoretical integration and foster cross-sectoral dialogue.

Nevertheless, these directions encourage more inclusive, longitudinal, and multi-perspective approaches, which hold significant promise for developing nuanced understandings of digital parenting across diverse contexts

Taken together, these insights highlight that in today's media-saturated environment, children increasingly engage with online platforms that present both developmental opportunities and potential risks (Konok et al., 2020; Nikken, 2018). As digital technologies become deeply embedded in the routines of everyday life, it becomes imperative that parents possess the necessary skills and awareness to effectively support and guide their children in navigating the challenges of the digital landscape (Benedetto & Ingrassia, 2020; Christakis, 2025; Livingstone et al., 2020).

With regard to practical implications, the findings highlight the need for targeted educational programs that enhance parents' digital literacy, support emotional responsiveness, and encourage flexible, adaptive mediation strategies tailored to these evolving challenges. Consequently, the implementation of structured parental support

programs emerges as a critical priority. These programs should not only focus on preventing online risks but also address the educational, social, and relational benefits of digital media (Mameli et al., 2025; Ramirez-Garcia & Aguaded-Gomez, 2020; Tosun & Mihci, 2020). A central aim of such initiatives is to promote children's digital well-being by strengthening parental digital competence and media literacy (Burns & Gottschalk, 2019; Mameli et al., 2025), since higher parental proficiency has been linked to increased self-efficacy in overseeing their children's digital engagement and more constructive attitudes toward technology (Nikken & de Haan, 2015). Moreover, these programs are expected to broaden parents' pedagogical repertoires by introducing a range of mediation strategies—from restrictive and technical approaches to those based on active collaboration and dialogue (Benedetto & Ingrassia, 2020; Nichols & Selim, 2022). At the same time, it is essential that these programs consider contextual factors such as cultural expectations, socioeconomic status, and family dynamics, as these fundamentally shape digital parenting practices (Modecki et al., 2022; Navarro & Tudge, 2023).

Ultimately, the implementation of targeted, evidence-based interventions to strengthen parental capabilities marks a pivotal step by the authors toward fostering more balanced, and developmentally appropriate digital environments within families.

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Appendices

Appendix 1.

Emerging conceptualizations of digital parenting in the analysed literature

Key concepts of digital parenting	Authors and Years	Definitions of the emerging concepts
Digital parenting as competence and awareness	Aydoğdu et al. (2024) Durualp et al. (2023) Fidan & Olur (2023) Öztürk & Şahin Sarıtaş (2023) Tosun & Mihci (2020) Kumas & Yildirim (2024) Edwards et al. (2020)	Emphasis on parents' ability to guide, protect, and model online behaviour through digital literacy, risk awareness, and role modelling.
Parenting styles and mediations Strategies	Aziz et al. (2022) Chemnad et al. (2023) Isikoglu et al. (2023) (Page Jeffery, 2024) Zhao et al. (2023) Pratiwi et al. (2022)	Focus on parenting styles and mediation strategies to regulate behaviour, communication, and interaction in digital contexts.
Educational and developmental support	Mameli et al. (2025) Ramirez-Garcia & Aguaded-Gomez (2020) Ponte et al. (2021)	The role of guidance, training, and support as key to parents' developmental role in digital contexts.
Contextual and cultural influences	Grane et al. (2023) Reginasari et al. (2021) Türen & Bağçeli Kahraman (2024)	Centrality of cultural norms, socioeconomic factors, beliefs, and family dynamics influencing parental strategies.

Source: Author's own elaboration

Appendix 2.

Methodological approaches of the included studies

Analytical approach (frequency of use)	Authors and Years	Main findings
quantitative (11)	*Aydogdu et al. (2024)* *Aziz et al. (2022)* *Chemnad et al. (2023)* *Durualp et al. (2023)* *Fidan & Olur (2023)* *Grané et al. (2023)* *Kumas & Yildirim (2024)* *Mameli et al. (2025)* *Ponte et al. (2021)* *Türen & Bağçeli Kahraman (2024)* *Zhao et al. (2023)*	Emotional support, autonomy promotion, context sensitivity, awareness, self-efficacy, and nuanced judgment as foundations of successful guidance.
qualitative (6)	*Edwards et al. (2020)* *Isikoglu et al. (2023)* *Page Jeffery (2024)* *Pratiwi et al. (2022)* *Ramirez-Garcia & Aguaded-Gomez (2020)* *Reginasari et al. (2021)*	Balance of guidance, trust, and adaptability; parental support of digital literacy through age-appropriate communication, involvement, and rule-setting for safe and meaningful technology use.
mixed methods (2)	*Tosun & Mihci (2020)* *Öztürk & Şahin Sarıtaş (2023)*	Comprehensive, sustainable digital parenting education; integration of technical and traditional parenting skills; importance of lifelong learning in an evolving digital landscape.

Source: Author's own elaboration

Appendix 3.

Detailed methodological profile of the selected quantitative studies

Authors and Years	Study design and methodological orientation	Data collection methods	Participants above 18	Minors referenced by parents
Aydogdu et al., 2024	Developmental research	Surveys, scales (e.g., digital parenting self-efficacy), and user interaction data	13 parents using a task list and 132 people during Android/iOS testing	Adolescents aged 10-14
Aziz et al., 2022	Cross-sectional survey	Internet Addiction Diagnostic Questionnaire (IADQ) for parents. Parental version of Young's Diagnostic Questionnaire (PYDQ) for adolescents.	165 parents	Adolescents aged 10–19
Chemnad et al., 2023	Cross-sectional survey	Internet Addiction Diagnostic Questionnaire (IADQ). Brief Family Relationship Scale (BFRS). WHO HBSC survey items (school pressure, peer/teacher support, academic performance)	479 adolescents in Qatar	Adolescents aged 11–17
Durualp et al., 2023	Descriptive survey	Demographic Information Form Digital Parenting Attitude Scale (DPAS) with two subscales: Approving Effective Use of Digital Media and Protecting Against Digital Media Risks	388 parents (273 mothers, 115 fathers)	Children and adolescents aged 6–15
Fidan & Olur, 2023	Correlational survey	Digital Parenting Self-Efficacy Scale (DPSS) Digital Parenting Attitude Scale (DPAS)	434 parents	Primary school children (ages ~6–14)

Grané et al., 2023	Descriptive study using structured interviews	Conducted via video calls using a guided interview format with A 30-question structured questionnaire	46 families	Children under the age of 6
Kumas & Yildirim, 2024	Correlational study	Face-to-face surveys with informed consent Digital Parenting Awareness Scale Digital Parenting Attitude Scale (DPAS) Digital Parenting Self-Efficacy Scale (DPSS)	180 parents	Children with special needs
Mameli et al., 2025	Repeated-measures quasi-experimental design with two intervention groups	Perceived Parental Autonomy Support Scale (P-PASS) Alabama Parenting Questionnaire (APQ) Home Situations Questionnaire (HSQ)	33 parents	29 Children aged 10-14
Ponte et al., 2021	Multivariate analysis using secondary data	EU Kids Online (2017–2019)	1404 children	Children aged 9–16
Türen & Bağçeli Kahraman, 2024	Cross-sectional survey study	Digital Play Addiction Tendency Scale (DPAT) Digital Parenting Awareness Scale (DPAS) Digital Literacy Assessment Scale	400 mother	Preschool children (aged 48–72 months)
Zhao et al., 2023	Correlational, predictive study	Parental mediation strategies scale (active, restrictive, authoritarian, nonintrusive) Digital parenting readiness scale (self-efficacy, perceived risks/benefits, skill gaps) Parental capital scale (economic, cultural, social)	530 parents	Children aged 10–17

Note: *Most studies include only adults with children in a given age group, typically asking them to answer with one particular child in mind. As a result, the number of children generally matches the number of parent participants.*

Source: Author's own elaboration

Appendix 4.

Detailed methodological profile of the selected qualitative studies

Authors and Years	Study design and methodological orientation	Data collection methods	Analytical framework and tools	Participants above 18	Minors referenced by parents
Edwards et al. (2020)	Participatory Action Research (PAR) and Participatory Design (PD), utilizing ethnographic approaches, longitudinal studies, and quasi-experimental design	Interviews, observations, diaries, child-centred interviews, and digital exemplars	Content analysis	Industry partners, educators, parents	Children aged 0-6
Isikoglu et al. (2023)	Qualitative case study	Semi-structured interviews (children, parents, psychiatrist) Home observations Digital play diaries (1 week)	Content analysis employing triangulation of data, method, and investigator"	9 Parents and a child psychiatrist	Children (aged 5–7)
Page Jeffery (2024)	Participatory Action Research (PAR)	Group discussions (parents and children separately) Scenario-based activities Post-it notes, whiteboard notes, field notes	Thematic analysis	115 parents,	Adolescents aged 10–16
Pratiwi et al. (2022)	Qualitative case study	Structured interviews (face-to-face,	Thematic analysis	27 university	Children aged 3–6

		video calls, voice notes)		lecturers in Indonesia	
Ramirez-Garcia & Aguaded-Gomez (2020)	Qualitative case study	Selected documents	Content analysis	Applied to 17 family education programs	NP
Reginasari et al. (2021)	Qualitative case study	Open-ended surveys (online and offline)	Thematic analysis	171 Indonesian parents of	Children aged 6–14

Note: As with Table 3, the number of children typically corresponds to the number of parent participants, based on study design.

Source: Author's own elaboration

Appendix 5.

Detailed methodological profile of the selected mixed-methods studies

Authors and Years	Data Collection Methods	Analytical framework and tools	Participants above 18	Minors referenced by parents
Tosun & Mihci (2020)	Quantitative Phase: Survey	Digital Parenting Attitude Scale (DPAS)	231 parents	Children under the age of 6
	Qualitative Phase: Open-ended questions	content analysis	NP	NP
Öztürk & Şahin Sarıtaş (2023)	Stage 1 Qualitative Semi-structured interviews	content analysis	33 parents.	NP
	Stage 2 Quantitative Survey	SCUASD Scale of Conscious Use of Applications on Smart Devices	602 parents	NP

Note: *As with Table 3, the number of children typically corresponds to the number of parent participants, based on study design.*

Source: Author's own elaboration