Impact of Parental Social Media Mediation on Cyberbullying among Adolescents: The Role of Religious Orientation and Ethical Values

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Abstract

This study investigates parental social mediation strategies (restrictive, Active) and their relationship with direct cyberbullying among adolescents, while also considering the moderating effects of community ethical value and intrinsic religious orientation. A cross-sectional study using a purposive sampling strategy examined 276 individuals from Sargodha, Mianwali, and Lahore in Pakistan's Punjab province. Participants were adolescents aged 13 to 18, during which many still determine their identities and societal responsibilities (Orenstein & Lewis, 2022). Four instruments were employed: one to assess intrinsic religious orientation, another to measure community ethical values, and a third to examine parental strategies for mediating social media use, encompassing both active and restrictive approaches. Findings indicate that an Active parental mediation strategy on social media significantly decreased occurrences of direct cyberbullying; on the other hand, restrictive mediation shows a negative correlation with direct cyberbullying. The community (ethical value) and intrinsic religious orientation mediate the relationship between parental social media mediation strategies (active, restrictive) and direct cyberbullying. This research enhances our comprehension of parental strategies for managing their adolescents' online interactions. It offers theoretical frameworks for how parents might mitigate the adverse impacts of cyberbullying on their children.

Keywords: parental social media mediation strategies, cyberbullying, interactive effects, religious orientation, ethical values.

Introduction

Parental social media mediation is based on theories of information processing, social media effects, and psychological consequences (John, 2007). This phenomenon involves how parents can properly govern social media content to mitigate the dangers of cyberbullying. It is the gap between teens' information consumption and their parents' mediation of social media how parents regulate their children's access to, reception of, processing of, and responses to social media information. This material significantly influences how their children match the attitudes and behaviours shown in the media (Kirwil, 2009). This concept examines how parental mediation and involvement can mitigate the negative effects of media on adolescents' development and well-being (Clark, 2017). Parental mediation strategies may mitigate some of the detrimental effects of social media exposure (Livingstone, 2007). Research indicates that adolescents may discuss cyberbullying and its effects with their parents (Shin & Ismail, 2014). The foundation comprises concepts related to media influence, information processing, and interpersonal communication (Nesi et al., 2021; Valkenburg et

al., 1999). Several techniques for family mediation alleviate the detrimental impacts of social media The parental mediation strategies employed by families to incorporate the Internet into their households and the efficacy of parental mediation in safeguarding youngsters from the associated risks are central to the ongoing discussion regarding policy, the public domain, and familial dynamics (Silverstone, 2003). Direct cyberbullying is a significant issue in contemporary society, and this study aims to examine its detrimental impacts (Silverstone & Haddon, 1996). As educators, parents must closely monitor the duration of their children's internet activities. The research depicts parents' efforts to regulate their children's social media use as an ongoing conflict between advantages and disadvantages (Livingstone & Helsper, 2008). This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of various parental mediation efforts by examining the relationships between these approaches and children's exposure to risks, potential harm, and online opportunities. In several instances, they used various parental mediation strategies concurrently to mitigate the effects of direct cyberbullying (Kwan & Skoric, 2013). Active and restricted social media mediation strategies to curtail their adolescents' online engagement.(Lwin et al., 2008) Social networking platforms like Instagram and Facebook are constructed using Web 2.0 technology, which includes user comments (Cormode & Krishnamurthy, 2008). Social media presents a greater complexity in terms of engagement, cost-effectiveness, communication strategy, and content compared to television or the internet (Nesi et al., 2021). By monitoring their children's social media accounts and profiles, parents may get insight into their children's online behaviour (Fletcher & Blair, 2016). It is essential to assess the probability, since certain strategies may mitigate some risks while diminishing the advantages of the Internet. This study aims to investigate the relationships among previous concepts within the Pakistani context.

Relationship between Parental Mediation of Social Media strategies and cyberbullying
1) Active Strategy: Parents openly discuss social media use and engage in online activities with their adolescents. Parents build trust, cooperation, and confidence in their online behaviour.
2) Restrictive mediation: The participants indicated that most parents impose restrictions on their children's social media use using a restrictive mediation method, and several regulations exist to govern children's internet activities (Ho et al., 2020). The effectiveness of diverse combinations of parental social media mediation strategies on cyberbullying remains unexplored, despite the examination of individual effects (Ho et al., 2017; Wachs et al., 2021). Parents significantly influence their teenagers' conduct toward cyberbullying, whether directly or indirectly (Mason, 2008). An individual or group using online communication platforms targeting a susceptible victim defines direct cyberbullying as the recurrent hostile behavior (Li et al., 2012). Research undertaken over the last two decades indicates that parents may actively assist their children in overcoming social media addiction and associated issues, including cyberbullying (Chadwick, 2014). In the 1980s, adolescents were exposed to pornographic and violent content on social media and television, perhaps leading to social harm by normalising aggression, consumerism, and criminal behaviour (Valkenburg et al., 1999). The parental mediation theory posits that parents use various strategies to alleviate the adverse impacts of social media (Nathanson, 1999). This hypothesis, based on theories of information processing, media effects, and interpersonal communication, posits that the beneficial impacts of social media on adolescents may be diminished via interactions between parents and youths (Clark, 2011). The media influences teens' ideas and actions; yet, research on parental mediation indicates that this influence may be mitigated by parental involvement (Shany & Yablon, 2021) Research indicates that these parental mediation strategies substantially mitigate the adverse impacts of social media (Chen & Chen, 2020). To alleviate the adverse impacts of social media on children, parents may use various interpersonal strategies, as suggested by the notion of parental mediation (Shin & Ismail, 2014; Valkenburg et al., 2013). The framework for the concept is based on the principles of ethics, media addiction, and cyberbullying. Researchers are convening to explore methods

by which parents may assist their children in managing the adverse impacts of social media, including cyberbullying (Daneels & Vanwynsberghe, 2017). To assist their adolescents in managing the adverse effects of social media, including cyberbullying and other types of online harassment, several parents use social media mediation strategies. A strategy for parents to mitigate their children's exposure to potentially detrimental social media is parental mediation. Results may vary based on the manner of parental mediation and the selected social media platform.

Mediational role of ethical orientation in the relationship between parental social media mediation strategies and cyberbullying

The study examines the ethical values of adolescents, particularly during their transition from elementary to secondary education. Numerous individuals contend that adolescence is a pivotal period for the development of one's personality and ethical values (Zeedyk & Cairney, 2003). Parental mediation strategies may vary significantly from those encountered in the original context, potentially intensifying emotions of confusion and discontent during mediation with parents. (Graham & Hill, 2003; Thompson et al., 2021; Tobbell, 2003; Weller, 2007). Teenagers have a strong awareness of good and evil and may comprehend fundamental ethical values (Mathes, 2021) Conversely, others contend that a child's dependence on electronic devices for social media may influence their ethical values, especially about community (Berkowitz, 2004; Borba & Villarreal, 2005). Parental social media mediation strategies, which use emotional and intellectual means, can affect and develop complex Ethical values of the adolescents (Killen & Nucci, 1995). Parental social media mediation strategy is used collectively because social media may cultivate children's moral character, so fostering intrinsic religious orientation and reinforcing their commitment to ethical principles and values. Parental support was shown to correlate with adolescents' inherent religious orientation, community ethical values, school involvement, and social competence (Furrow, 2004; Spears et al., 2011). Students with a strong religious orientation exhibited a heightened feeling of parental connection, mediation, community ethics value, and increased prosocial concerns (Furrow et al., 2004). An adolescent's ethical concepts are formed early via personal and social interactions with parents, caretakers, siblings, and other family members, just as ethical values and religious orientation influence the correlation between cyberbullying and parental media mediation strategies. Parental omission of social media is essential for imparting ethical values throughout the adolescent transition. The focus would be on identifying the key factors influencing teens' character development and perceptions of moral concepts.

Mediational role of religious orientation in the relationship of parental social media mediation strategies and cyberbullying

A person's religious orientation comprises practices, beliefs, and objectives related to cultivating a significant relationship with God. (Adams, 1995). A comprehensive paradigm of religiosity included both internal and external religious sentiments. This paradigm posits that individuals who are intrinsically motivated by their religious beliefs are more likely to adhere to their faith than those who seek social, emotional, or intellectual benefits from religion.(Allport, 1950) The use of social media may profoundly influence children's ethical values and religious beliefs (Buckingham, 2007; Bushman, 2015; Selwyn, 2003). A fundamental ethical concept is religiosity, since religion promotes humanitarian conduct and the establishment of moral norms (Landor, 2011). Numerous parents saw themselves as intermediaries between their own beliefs and their children's ethical values, and parental mediation strategies to combat cyberbullying (Baier, 2001). A specific study indicated that parental mediation aids youngsters in avoiding cyberbullying issues and that there is a correlation between religious orientation and ethical and moral values.(Dowling, 2006). Religion is an essential moral compass, promoting virtuous actions and elevating the adopted ethical standards. Religious orientation mediates between the relationships of cyberbullying

and parental mediation due to the formation of their religious orientation (Landor, 2011). These adolescents follow religious beliefs mostly due to parental mediation, rather than possessing strong Ethical values (Cohen-Malayev, 2014)

Objectives of Study

Based on the present study discourse, certain objectives have been to investigate the impact of parental and active restrictive social media mediation strategy on cyberbullying among adolescents. To investigate the impact of parental Active social media mediation strategy on cyberbullying among adolescents. Mediating role of Community (ethical value) and intrinsic religious orientation between parental social media mediation strategy, Restrictive and cyberbullying

Hypotheses

    H1: Parental social media mediation strategy (Active) will predict positively direct cyberbullying, whereas Parental social media mediation strategy (Restrictive) will predict negatively direct cyberbullying among adolescents.

    H2: Ethical Value (community) will mediate the relationship between parental social media mediation strategy and cyberbullying among adolescents

    H3: Religious Orientation will mediate the relationship between parental social media mediation strategy and cyberbullying among adolescents

Fig 1

A framework for parental media mediation strategies, ethical values, religious orientation
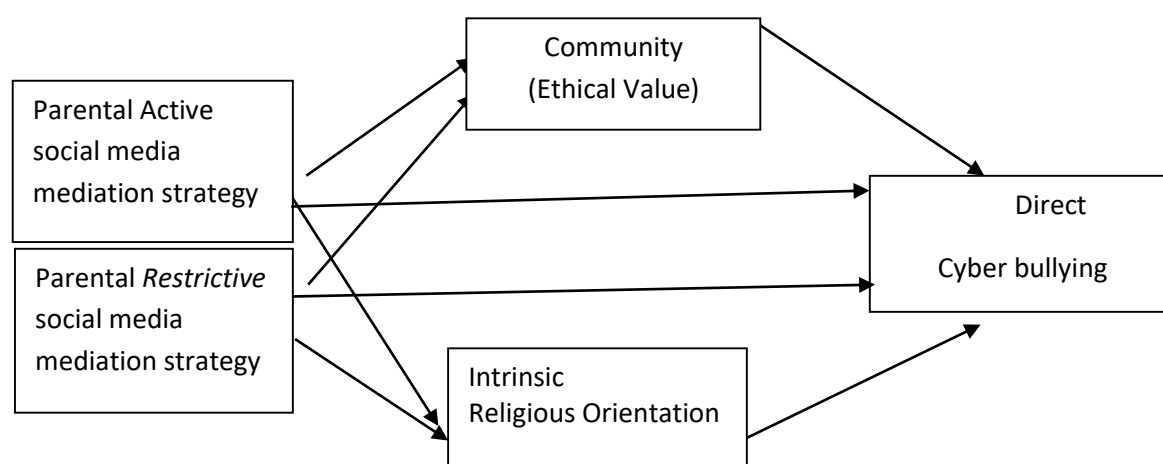
METHOD

The research investigated the mediating effects of community ethical standards and intrinsic religious orientation on the impact of parental social media mediation tactics on teens' direct involvement in cyberbullying.

Research Design

The suggested research included quantitative methodologies and a cross-sectional survey methodology. This approach will consist of two distinct studies. The pilot and primary studies assessed the psychometric qualities of the focal measures and the theoretical relationships among the targeted components.

Sample

This research included total 276 Muslim adolescents from Pakistan. Participants were intentionally chosen from Sargodha, Mianwali, and Lahore for educational purposes. Adolescents varied in age, financial level, and gender, with 116 students in coupled families and 160 in nuclear homes, accounting for 48% of the total. The 13–15 age group had 189((68%) teenagers while the 16–18 had 87(32%). The sample consisted of 144 males and 132 females.

The ages of 13 to 18 represent the peak of the Identity vs. Role Confusion stage in Erikson's theory of psychological development.

Procedure: We engaged with the research sample and gathered data from 276 adolescents after official authorisation from public and private educational institutions. The study's objective and comprehensive instructions for responding to the questions and executing the research methodology were provided to the participants. The participants were instructed to respond honestly and transparently. There was no restriction on completing the questionnaires, and all replies would be kept private and confidential. The complete questionnaires from the participants were collected manually. Ultimately, all participants were evaluated and expressed gratitude for their assistance and collaboration.

Instruments: The specifics of the research instruments are as follows: This research used the following scales, administered in their Urdu versions. According to all the processes established by Brislin (1986), an expert panel review employs a four-step procedure consisting of forward translation, reverse translation, and a validation study to enhance the accessibility of the scales for translation (Brislin & Freimanis, 2001). This research included translating the nine components of the Parental Active Social Media Mediation Strategy and the Parental Restrictive Social Media Mediation Strategy Scale. The questions use a 7-point Likert-type answer scale, where one signifies 'never' and seven denotes 'very frequently', to reflect the degree of attention to the action. The components of this unidimensional scale are not reverse-coded. Both the Active and restrictive measures had alpha values of .84 and .98 (Ho et al., 2020). The research further employs Urdu translations of the other three scales. Cyberbullying Scale accompanied by an Urdu Translation (Buelga et al., 2020) The degree of attention to the specific activity is measured using a 5-point Likert-type answer format with 10 items. The spectrum of potential responses spans from 0 (never) to 5 (often). The components of this unidimensional scale are not reverse-coded. Your ultimate score is obtained by summing the results of all 10 questions. Buelga et al. (2020) reported a coefficient alpha of .92 for the scale. The Gorsuch-McPherson Intrinsic Religious Orientation Scale (1989) evaluated participants' religious orientation using the Urdu version of the original scale created by Allport and Ross (1967) (Gorsuch & McPherson, 1989). This scale has eight components. Utilise a 5-point Likert scale to assess the extent of cognitive engagement in an activity. Three elements of this one-dimensional subscale are reverse-coded. The final scores are determined by summing the responses to all eight questions. The scale's coefficient alpha was 0.89. The Community subscale of ethical views, as defined by Walker and Jensen (2015), consists of six questions measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 0 (never) to 5 (very frequently). The coefficient alpha of the scale was 0.75.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and Correlation among the Variables of the Study

Variables	α	M	SD	Sk	1	2	3	4	5
PRSMMS	.84	19.86	6.15	-.92	1	-.90**	.86**	-.51**	-.49**
PASMMS	.98	19.87	4.64	.32		1	-.80**	.42**	.41**
Direct Cyberbullying	.83	19.94	7.76	-.64			1	-.67**	-.59**
Community (Ethical value)	.80	19.50	5.70	-.17				1	.81**

Intrinsic Orientation	Religious	.71	28.55	4.93	-.11		1

Table 2
Mediation Analysis Showing the Indirect Effect of Ethical value, religious orientation between [Parental social media mediation strategies (Active, Restrictive) and direct cyberbullying

Paths		B	β	95% CI of B		p
				LL	UL	
PASMMS ⟶ DCB		.64	-.80	-1.45	1.21	.000
PASMMS ⟶ CEV		.51	.42	.38	.65	.000
CEV ⟶ DCB		.57	-.39	.62	.45	.000
PASMMS ⟶ CEV ⟶ DCB		-.28	-.63	-.38	-.19	.000
PASMMS ⟶ IRO		.42	.40	.31	.54	.000
IRO ⟶ DCB		-.50	-.32	-.61	-.41	.000
PASMMS ⟶ IRO ⟶ DCB		-.21	.66	-.29	-.14	.000
PRSMMS ⟶ DCB		1.11	.88	1.14	1.08	.000
PRSMMS ⟶ CEV		-.47	-.50	-.56	-.37	.000
CEV ⟶ DCB		-.39	-.49	-.46	-.32	.000
PRSMMS ⟶ CEV ⟶ DCB		.18	.14	.12	.25	.000
PRSMMS ⟶ IRO		.12	.10	.08	.18	.000
IRO ⟶ DCB		-.39	-.49	-.47	-.31	.000
PRSMMS ⟶ IRO ⟶ DCB		-.32	-.20	-.42	-.23	.000

P>.001, PASMMS: Parental Active media mediation strategy, PRSMMS: Parental Restrictive media mediation strategy, CEV: Community (ethical value), DCB: Direct cyberbullying

Discussion:
Parental Active social media mediation reduces teenagers' direct cyberbullying, and there is a significant mediating role of ethical values, such as community and intrinsic religious orientation, between Parental Active social media mediation strategy and direct cyberbullying (Cabello-Hutt et al., 2018). The Active strategy of parental social media mediation exhibits a negative correlation with cyberbullying, but the restrictive strategies of parental social media mediation show a positive correlation with direct cyberbullying. Cyberbullying has a negative correlation with the subscales of ethical values, community, and intrinsic religious orientation. Parental Active social media mediation, informed by parent–child communication, emphasises mediation strategies while considering teens' inherent tendencies towards cyberbullying and their religious orientation(Ahn, 2024). Adolescents whose parents established regulations and behavioural patterns exhibited more receptiveness to parental oversight and demonstrated internalised self-control in social media use, resulting in a reduction in cyberbullying incidents. The occurrence of direct cyberbullying was not significantly connected with restricted mediation. Prior studies indicate that parents' strict mediation often fails to mitigate teens' online risks, including contact and privacy issues(Kang et al., 2022). Restrictive mediation presented perceived challenges to personal autonomy, leading to psychological reactance and unfavourable assessments of parents (Liu et al., 2023). Parents may affect their adolescents' social media use by using several strategies that may influence their cyberbullying and online behaviour. Co-use (engaging with children online) and Active (controlled) mediation (establishing parameters for children's internet use) are two tactics (Livingstone & Helsper, 2008). Discussing children's internet behaviours is an essential aspect of Active mediation. Parents who engage in Active mediation directly discuss online habits and are involved in online activities with their children. At the same time, those who use methods of restriction and control on their children's internet usage. Studies demonstrate a negative link between these strategies and children's engagement in cyberbullying (Lenhart et al., 2011; Wright, 2018). Parental involvement and the

establishment of clear limits correlate with reduced instances of cyberbullying behaviour in youngsters. Conversely, non-intrusive approaches allow teenagers more autonomy with less involvement, whereas restrictive mediation involves limiting access or imposing regulations around internet use. Studies have shown a significant association between these strategies and occurrences of cyberbullying (Kowalski et al., 2014; Ran & Shreshtha, 2021). Children may seek alternate online spaces or participate in cyberbullying when parents are excessively restrictive or disengaged. Principles of Ethics: Several ethical values, such as honouring others' autonomy, refraining from harm (deviance), and fostering positive social interactions (community), influence cyberbullying behaviours. Studies have shown a negative correlation between cyberbullying and these ethical ideals (Patchin & Hinduja, 2018; Sticca & Perren, 2013). Adolescents raised with these values are less prone to engage in online bullying. Studies have linked decreased instances of cyberbullying behaviours to both intrinsic (rooted in one's convictions) and extrinsic (stemming from external influences) religious orientations (Kowalski & Limber, 2013; Wright & Khoo, 2020). Religious orientation often emphasises the need for kindness, compassion, and respect for others, which might mitigate the likelihood of cyberbullying. Religious orientation and ethical ideals serve as a mediating factor in the correlation between parental social media mediation strategies and direct cyberbullying behaviors.

Parental mediation measures that rigorously adhere to moral standards and reinforce established religious beliefs are more effective in mitigating cyberbullying than those that are less stringent or lenient (Hughes, 2021; Wright et al., 2018). Children who adopt these principles are more likely to behave correctly online and refrain from engaging in cyberbullying.

Conclusions

In conclusion, parental social media mediation significantly affects children's tendency to engage in cyberbullying. Aggressive and Active techniques mitigate such behaviors, while restricted and non-intrusive measures may unintentionally exacerbate them. Ethical beliefs and religious orientation significantly mediate these impacts, offering a foundation for youngsters to handle online relationships. Subsequent studies must investigate these linkages to enhance successful parenting practices in the digital era.

Implications of the Study

It is recognised that social media use among teenagers may have adverse impacts. Despite significant attention from parents and the media, minimal research has investigated the possible links between parental mediation tactics and direct cyberbullying. Compelling data from the current research demonstrates that Active mediation may reduce direct cyberbullying.

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