

Parenting in the Feed: How Social Media Supports Adult Education

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Abstract:

This study, “Parenting in the Feed,” examines social media as a non-formal adult education tool for parents. Based on a survey of 100 parents, YouTube is the most popular platform for parenting information (48%), followed by Facebook and Instagram (20% each) and WhatsApp (12%). Parents observed that social media provides easy access to parenting education through forums, videos, professional advice, and demonstrations.

According to the study, social media-based parenting education had major benefits, with 40% of participants reporting improvements in their parenting knowledge and abilities. 15% praised the flexibility of self-paced learning and the emotional support of online parenting forums, and 18% valued having access to professional guidance. The results show that algorithm-driven content feeds encourage individualised learning experiences based on the unique requirements of parents and the developmental stages of their children.

Keywords: Parenting, Feed, Social media, Adult Education

Introduction:

Parenting has become an interactive educational experience because of social media, a phenomenon known as “Parenting in the Feed.” Parents now have easy access to professional thoughts, guidance, and testimonies on a variety of child-rearing topics, encouraging lifelong learning. This gives caregivers, mothers in particular, the ability to adjust to shifting family dynamics, but it also prompts worries about inaccurate information. Meta-analysis of digital parenting (2025): 88 studies link positive online co-use to child well-being. The four tactics of digital parenting are co-use, general oversight, negative mediation, and positive mediation. Children's digital wellness includes both good elements like enjoyment and skill development, as well as bad ones like addiction and cyberbullying. The results show that no single tactic is always successful; instead, results vary depending on the particular situation. Beyens (2022) suggests that to increase parental confidence in handling digital content, media-specific parenting employs focused techniques such as co-viewing, restricted mediation, and active mediation. According to research from 2018 to 2022 that demonstrates lower levels of anxiety among young people, these strategies are specifically designed for platforms like Instagram and Reels, giving parents useful tools to reduce digital demands and improve adolescent well-being. Globally, internet access and usage have surged among children and adolescents (Anderson & Jiang, 2018; Holloway et al., 2013; Ofcom, 2023a; Smahel et al.,

2020). Social media is transforming parenting into an interactive educational setting by offering up-to-date information on child development and mental health. These tools are used by parents to empower themselves, learn skills like critical appraisal, and find support in group discussions. This is especially noticeable. Visualisation techniques strengthen authoritative parenting approaches, which can reduce false information and boost the results for young people. Social media usage incentives have changed since 2015, demonstrating notable effects and underscoring the need for interventions in several domains, including the medical and educational sectors. Although there are still gaps in long-term indigenous studies and women's lifetime learning via social media, school integrations strengthen agency and highlight clinical linkages. According to the theory, “the feed” is a democratised classroom that enhances resilient caregiving in the era of digital technology. Future studies should concentrate on the quantitative effects of tribal contexts on adaptability and confidence.

Background of Adult Education:

Adult education is the process by which people, usually older than those required to attend school, acquire new values, information, and skills for their own or their careers' advancement. Although its origins can be traced back to ancient philosophers, it was organised during the Industrial Revolution in the 18th and 19th centuries. In Nottingham, the first adult school was founded in 1798 to instruct manufacturing workers in reading. Initiatives for literacy and mutual education were greatly aided in the United States by individuals such as Benjamin Franklin and Josiah Holbrook. Andragogy, a notion first proposed by Alexander Kapp in the 1830s and subsequently made popular by Malcolm Knowles, is what defines the discipline of adult education. It emphasises self-directed learning and the application of life experiences. Pedagogy, which focuses on teacher-led education for kids, is different from this method. Andragogy is widely defined by UNESCO as any formal and informal organised educational activities that enable adults to address personal and societal concerns. In the past, adult education has encompassed civic involvement, vocational training, and literacy. This was especially true in post-independence India, where it was renamed "social education" to improve literacy in addition to universal primary schooling through Five-Year Plans.

Formal, non-formal, and informal learning are all included in adult education, which aims to promote social justice, economic empowerment, and lifelong learning in a tech-driven, globalised society. Even while there are still challenges, particularly with regard to access for disadvantaged groups, it offers benefits such as increased participation in society, career growth, and awareness of rights. These days, it emphasises that education is a universal human right for all ages and makes more use of digital platforms while concentrating on the requirements of adult learners.

Social media as an educational tool:

Through a variety of methods, social media platforms improve adult education. While Instagram and Reels concentrate on brief, interesting content, Facebook groups facilitate lengthy conversations and peer support. Reddit allows anonymous topic-based discussions, and YouTube provides comprehensive training. Busy parents may now attend education thanks to these platforms, which accommodate a variety of learning methods and time constraints. Videos and live Q&A sessions are examples of educational content, and algorithms tailor feeds

to increase motivation and relevancy. Parents' jobs and caregiving obligations can be accommodated by accessibility, which provides them with flexible, often free access to information.

Parenting in the Feed:

Parenting in the feed explores how social media platforms impact contemporary parenting, with parents seeking community and guidance on sites like Instagram and Facebook. Influencer-curated information and real experiences are combined in this movement, which frequently prioritises viral trends and evidence-based practices. It emphasises how adult education is shifting away from formal education programs and toward informal, digital learning, where parents can access quick video lectures on a variety of parenting subjects. By turning social media feeds into self-directed learning centres that promote community support while posing concerns like cyberbullying and privacy violations, this dynamic redefines informal adult education. Issues like addiction and stress highlight the need for media literacy programs in parenting education, even while the benefits include real-time Q&A groups and challenges that foster solidarity for lonely new parents. Additionally, "parenting in the feed" inspires academics to examine how social media affects lifelong learning, supporting treatments that foster discernment and culturally appropriate skills to enhance empowerment and connectedness.

Review and Literature:

Supthanasup, A. et al. (2022). They found that Mothers typically turn to their social networks for guidance on child feeding, but little is known about how they utilise internet communities for post-breastfeeding techniques. Through semi-structured interviews, this study explores Thai mothers' opinions on Facebook infant feeding support groups. It concludes that by normalising events and examining menu dishes influenced by psychological and environmental factors, participation helps reduce ambiguity. The study highlights the need for cooperative methods to improve conventional knowledge and recommends using social media for health promotion.

Herdiana Hanindita, M. et al. (2024). Their study found that social media (SM) has drastically altered how parents, especially women in Indonesia, learn about complementary feeding (CF) techniques in the digital era. According to a survey of 1,631 moms of children between the ages of 0 and 23 months, 57.1% of them get information about CF via the internet, mostly from sites like Instagram and TikTok. The majority of participants were highly educated, between the ages of 26 and 30, and full-time moms were more impacted by SM. According to the study, there is a relationship between social media usage and educational attainment: higher education is associated with greater Instagram use, whilst lower education is associated with less use. Despite the fact that SM offers rapid and easy access to CF information, a large portion of it lacks supporting data, which causes misunderstanding among parents.

Objective of the study:

1. To explore how parents use social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube) to gain parenting knowledge and skills.
2. Social media platforms help parents learn like adults by providing easily accessible, casual, and community-focused educational opportunities.
3. To understand how digital literacy influences parents' ability to effectively learn from social media content.
4. To assess the benefits of social media as a tool for flexible, self-directed adult education in parenting.

Methodology:

Research design: This study investigates how social media supports adult education among parents using

a quantitative descriptive research approach. It uses a structured questionnaire to gather numerical data in order to statistically analyse perceptions. The emphasis is on how parents use social media to learn about parenting, share their experiences, and improve their parenting techniques.

Population: The target population is adult parents aged 20-50 who utilise social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp for parenting-related information. They engage with these digital platforms for learning and support in parenting.

Sample size: The study will include 100 respondents, an adequate sample size for descriptive and basic inferential statistical analyses in a quantitative survey.

Tools and techniques: A convenience sampling/ technique will be used to select participants based on accessibility, willingness, and active social media use for parenting-related purposes. The structured questionnaire was designed to gather information on respondents. Collected data were exported to Microsoft Excel for data coding and cleaning. The data set was imported into SPSS Statistics, including frequency, percentage, means, standard deviation and correction.

Result Discussion:

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 100)

variable	category	frequency	percentage
Gender	male	35	35%
	female	65	65%
Age	20-30 years	45	45%
	30-40 years	25	24%
	40-50 years	23	23%
	Above 50	07	7%
Educational qualification	Primary	30	30%
	Secondary	40	40%
	Graduation	30	30%

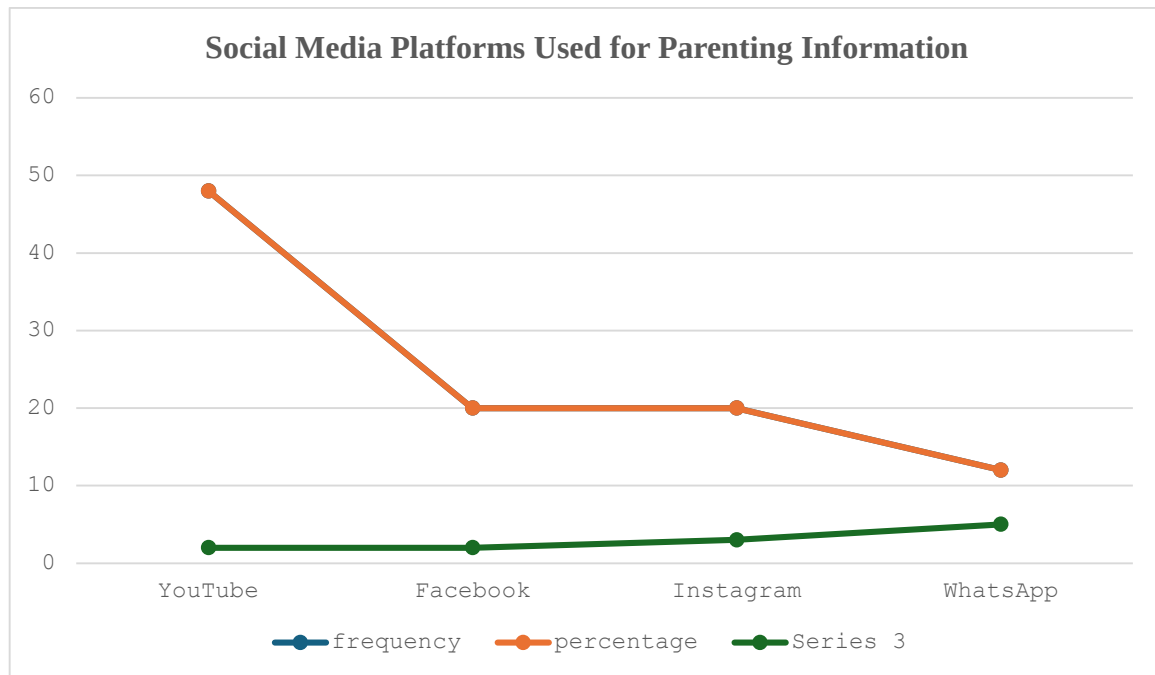
Out of 100 respondents, 65% were female and 35% male, indicating that women, especially mothers, are more engaged in seeking parenting information on social media. This suggests a higher likelihood of female parents using digital platforms to enhance their parenting knowledge. The age distribution among 100 respondents revealed that 45% belonged to the 20-30 years age group, indicating younger adults primarily use social media for educational purposes, likely due to their familiarity with digital technologies. Regarding educational qualifications, 40% had secondary education, while 30% had primary education and 30% were graduates. This balanced educational background suggests diverse use of social media for parenting information, with secondary and graduate-educated respondents possibly more adept at accessing and applying digital content.

Table 2. Social Media Platforms Used for Parenting Information

Platform	frequency	percentage
YouTube	48	48
Facebook	20	20
Instagram	20	20

WhatsApp	12	12
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With 48% of respondents using YouTube, 20% of respondents also used Facebook and Instagram to earn parenting knowledge. YouTube is the most popular source of parenting knowledge. The utilisation rates of WhatsApp platforms are lower, at 12% respectively.

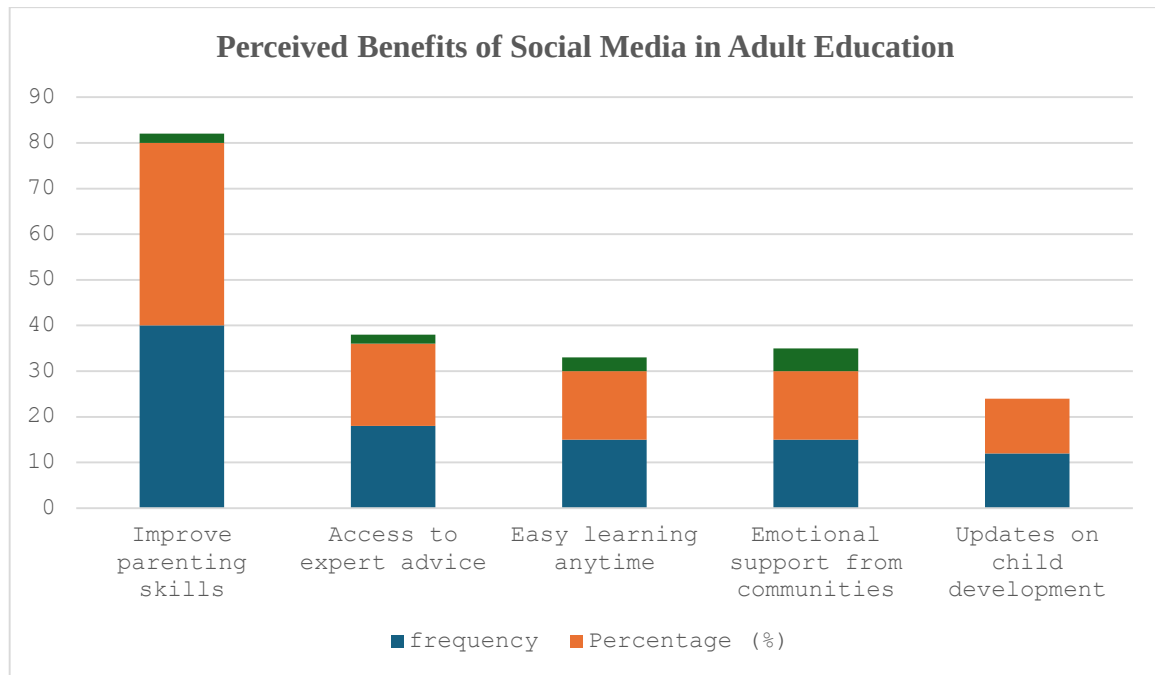


According to the graph, 48% of respondents use YouTube, which is the most popular social media site for parenting advice. WhatsApp is the least popular at 12%, while Facebook and Instagram each get 20%. This implies that while social networks like Facebook and Instagram are important for disseminating this information, parents prefer video-based platforms for parenting advice.

Table 3. Perceived Benefits of Social Media in Adult Education

Benefit	frequency	Percentage (%)
Improve parenting skills	40	40
Access to expert advice	18	18
Easy learning anytime	15	15
Emotional support from communities	15	15
Updates on child development	12	12

The results show that improving parenting skills is the main advantage of digital parenting resources (40%), with access to professional counsel coming in second (18%). Flexible learning (15%), emotional support from online groups (15%), and updates on child growth (12%) are additional benefits that highlight their educational, accessible, and supportive qualities.



The graph shows that improving parenting skills is the main benefit of social media in adult education (40%). Access to professional guidance is second (18%), with flexible learning options and community emotional support coming in second and third, respectively, at 15%. The least important advantage, according to 12% of respondents, is updates on child growth. All things considered, social media greatly enhances parents' understanding, provides professional advice, and encourages continuous learning for well-informed parenting decisions.

Findings:

According to the study, social media greatly aids in adult education. Of the 100 respondents, 65% were female, suggesting that mothers are more involved. The majority of respondents (45%) were between the ages of 20 and 30, which reflects how at ease younger parents are using digital media. With 40% of the population having completed secondary school, the educational backgrounds of the participants varied. For parenting knowledge, 48% of respondents chose YouTube, with Facebook and Instagram coming in second and third, respectively, at 20% and 12%. Enhanced parental abilities (40%), access to professional guidance (18%), flexible learning (15%), emotional support (15%), and updates on child growth (12%) were among the main advantages. All things considered, social media is a useful resource for expanding parenting expertise and encouraging lifelong learning.

Conclusion:

Social media is an effective platform for adult education in parenting, offering accessible and flexible learning that enhances parenting skills and child development awareness. The study found that women and younger adults predominantly use social media for this purpose, particularly favouring YouTube for its engaging content. Beyond education, social media provides emotional support and expert advice through online communities. While it serves as a valuable tool for lifelong learning, users must critically assess online information to ensure reliance on evidence-based sources.

Social media offers instant access to knowledge, peer support, and chances for informal learning, making

it an effective tool for adult education in parenting. Through online communities, it fosters emotional bonds and self-directed learning. Enhancing digital literacy and content credibility is crucial for optimising the educational advantages of social media, which should supplement rather than replace conventional parental education.

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