RESTRICTIVE DIGITAL PARENTING AND ITS PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT ON CHILDREN IN PAKISTAN: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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Abstract

As technology advances, parents are rethinking how they manage their children's online lives. This systematic review explores the psychological effects of strict digital parenting in Pakistan, particularly on children's emotions, behavior, relationships, and cognitive development. Using thematic synthesis of 12 peer-reviewed studies published between 2015 and 2025, the review incorporates findings from urban and rural settings, covering children and adolescents aged 6–18. Five key themes emerged: emotional distress linked to parental control, behavioral shifts including covert internet use, strained parent–child relationships, gender-based disparities in digital access and monitoring, and impacts on mental health and identity formation. Findings consistently show that rigid rules such as unexplained bans on screen time or apps heighten anxiety, create emotional distance, and weaken parental trust. A lack of empathetic guidance often leads children to engage secretly online, which can hinder social and cognitive development. Additionally, girls face disproportionately intense digital surveillance, which stifles self-expression, limits autonomy, and reinforces traditional gender roles. This review situates these outcomes within Pakistan's distinct socio-cultural, educational, and familial context. It argues for balanced, communication-based digital parenting strategies that safeguard emotional well-being while fostering responsible, confident digital engagement among youth.

Keywords: Restrictive digital parenting, emotional impact, adolescent mental health, parent-child relationship.

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INTRODUCTION

We live in a highly connected world today, digital technology has become a certainty in children's lives. Nowadays, many young people use the internet for schoolwork, chatting online and enjoying online entertainment (Zubair et al., 2025). What was once considered a luxury is now a fundamental part of how children learn, communicate, and navigate the world. But, as children use digital devices more often, parents are facing a difficult challenge: keeping their children's feelings and minds safe in a world that is not well controlled. With the expanding of fast and uneven increase in internet use in Pakistan, along with strong traditions in parenting, this issue appears differently than in other places (Kemp,2023). In particular, using strict control over kids' technology can raise questions about what it does to their mental and emotional well-being. Learning about how parenting affects Pakistani children is not only current; it is crucial for healthy family life in the modern world (Zaman, 2013).

Digital parenting refers broadly to the practices parents adopt to monitor, guide, or control their children's use of digital technologies. It includes strategies such as setting screen-time limits, blocking inappropriate content, supervising online activities, and engaging in discussions about internet safety (Ali et al., 2024). Restrictive digital parenting also refers to limiting your child's digital activities, often while communicating and understanding little from them. Most of the time, these strategies are used to protect children, but studies now suggest that very strict measures may negatively affect children's minds, especially when they are not given any explanation or help (Shin & Li, 2016). The significance of this concern is greater in Pakistan than in other places. At present, over 130 million people in Pakistan use the internet and about 36% of those are teens and school-age children using smartphones, various platforms and online tools (Kemp, 2023). Invisible lines of division still exist in the digital realm because of people's location, gender, education status and social class. In homes that use technology less and may not be as open to change, parents often set limits because they worry about moral troubles, bullying, unacceptable material or not paying attention to schoolwork (Imran et al., 2023). When a culture values family reputation, privacy and conservative behavior, these matters are more important.

The age range of 6 to 18 was carefully chosen because children in these years need particular support. The years between infancy and adolescence are major ones for children's thinking, feelings and relationships, as various theorists explain (Wesarg-Menzel et al., 2023). Piaget believed that kids at this stage begin to use logic, comprehend the relationship between cause and effect and see more clearly what they can and cannot do. From the age of 12, adolescents enter the formal operational stage where they start to care deeply about autonomy, being watched and trusting others (Main, 2021). Freud highlighted the latency and genital stages, saying they cover the same age period and encourage people to embrace society's rules, control wild impulses and build proper human relationships (Lantz et al., 2025). The authors of these theories state that children between 7 and 12 are easily affected by emotional issues that come from unclear or strict parenting in the digital age (Lantz & Ray, 2022). Additionally, this group intersects with the time when digital tools are important for learning as well as interacting with others at school. As a result, studying the influence of digital parenting on children aged 6–18 in Pakistan gives better insight into how it shapes their emotions, behaviours and relationships (None Aisyah Nur'Aini & None Minsih, 2022). Generally, adults make decisions in Pakistan using traditional ways which keeps them from often having open, detailed conversations with their children. So, since there is not much information on parenting online and the government focuses little on promoting parenting skills, parents typically choose the strictest ways over working with their kids (Ali et al., 2024). As a result, kids under strict digital rules may face more stress, break those rules repeatedly, have difficulty with their feelings and avoid social situations.

Some researchers are now studying how parents use technology with their children in Pakistan. Research in places such as Lahore and Islamabad shows that although parents are concerned over online safety, they rarely know or feel confident enough to manage their children's online activities more closely (Iqbal et al., 2021; Munawar et al., 2021). Alternatively, many societies decide to keep certain applications unavailable, remove technology items or prevent girls from going online. These steps are designed to help, but they can negatively impact children's learning, social skills and mental development. Restrictions are good for kids when kept in moderation; otherwise, they might

begin to doubt their abilities and fight with their parents (Munawar et al., 2021).

In addition, research has shown that parenting teens with online control can cause them to develop more mental health problems. For example, research has found that putting strict digital rules on children can rob them of their stability, leading them to depression, difficulty controlling emotions or hiding their activities on the web (Bibi et al., 2021). If access to certain websites is limited, some children may end up seeking danger, as they look for a way to bypass parental controls and to use the internet alone. While the findings are in keeping with studies from around the world, they have special meanings in Pakistan due to differences in culture, religion and parent-child interactions. Besides, there are certain online challenges that Pakistani children encounter more often than other groups. Parents are concerned about cyber harassment, passing on incorrect information, culturally unsuitable material and online groomers, all of which may lead to stricter parenting (Dolev-Cohen et al., 2024). At the same moment, most children are not involved in formal programs about digital literacy or safe places where they can practice using digital tools properly (Youssef et al., 2025). Children who are online without knowing how to handle the risks can suffer psychologically when they become adults.

Because of these difficulties, it is very important to go through existing studies in Pakistan on parenting with a focus on restrictions and their effects on the minds of children (Youssef et al., 2025). Many works have discussed the positives and negatives of digital parenting, but not much research in Pakistan has gathered insights on psychological impacts and parenting aspects. While global literature has extensively documented the benefits and risks of digital parenting styles, few studies have synthesised this knowledge within the Pakistani context. The socio-cultural, economic, and educational specificities of Pakistan mean that findings from Western or even other South Asian countries may not be fully applicable. A systematic review of Pakistani studies, therefore, is essential not only to map the current evidence but also to identify gaps, contradictions, and directions for future research and policy (Butt & Park, 2024).

The review aims to close this gap by collecting and reviewing studies that look at how children of 6-18 in Pakistan are affected psychologically by

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strict digital parenting. The study focuses on answering the research question. What are the psychological effects of restrictive digital parenting on children in Pakistan, based on empirical evidence from the past decade?

Focusing on publications from the last ten years, this review looks at how strict digital guidelines may impact children's emotional, mental, social and cognitive development. It also brings attention to differences in these outcomes based on gender, city versus village living and the levels of parental education all highly relevant in Pakistan. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to inform parents, educators, mental health workers and others who make policies about what digital parenting involves. This shows that parents should use strategies that both defend their children and support their children's mental growth. Essentially, this research improves our understanding of problem-solving among parents in Pakistan, especially those using strict digital tools.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This review aims to:

1. *Examine the psychological impact of restrictive digital parenting on children aged 6 to 18 in Pakistan.*
2. *Explore how cultural norms, gender roles, and family dynamics shape children's emotional and behavioral responses to digital restrictions.*
3. *Identify gaps in existing research and provide insights to support future studies, parenting practices, and policy development.*
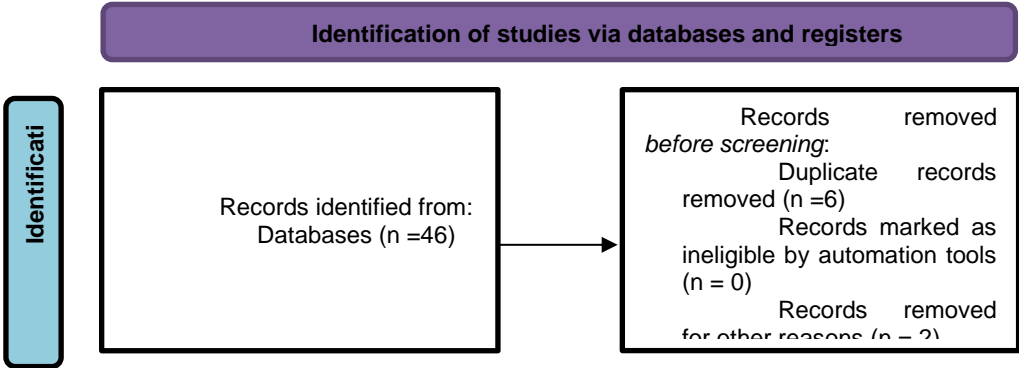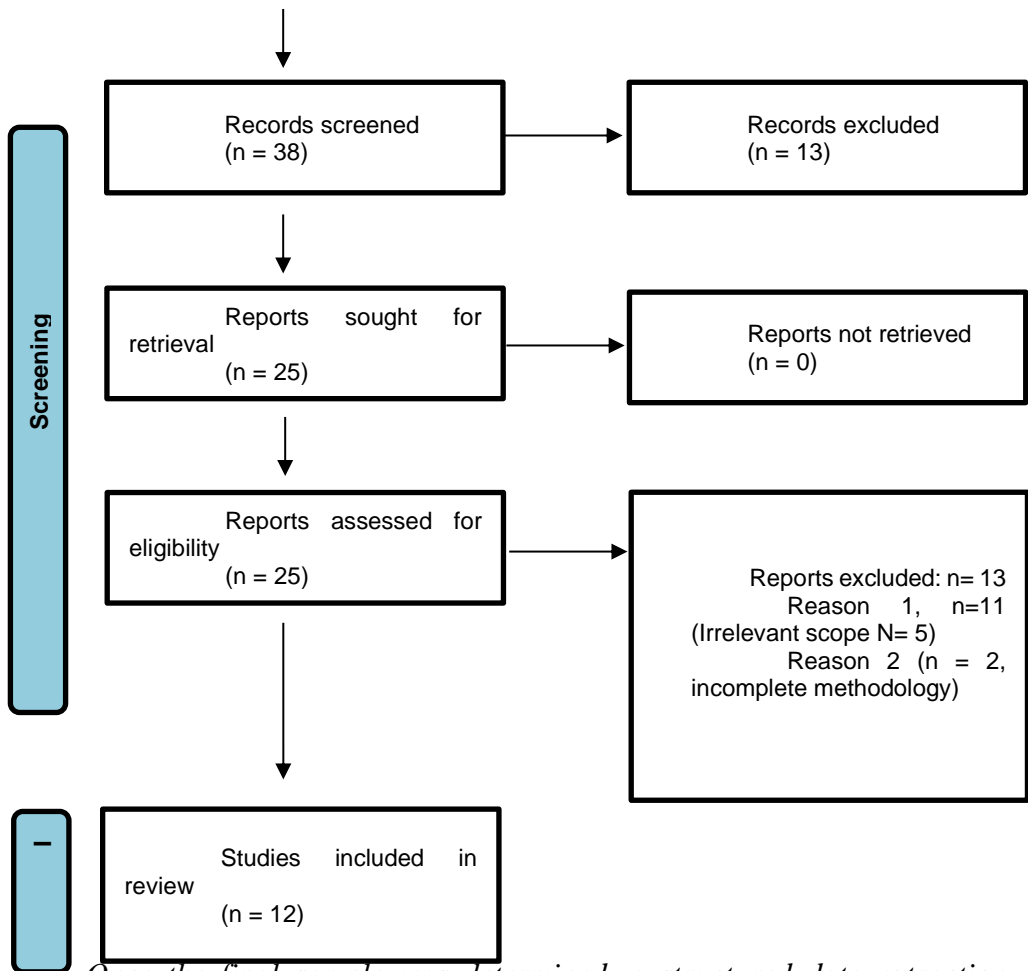
METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS

To study the effects of restrictive parenting online on Pakistani children's mental health, information was gathered through a systematic review. Systematic reviews help collect, review and explaining the results from different studies, giving a thorough response to a set question. To keep the research credible and detailed, this review was guided by PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) protocols. To find the proper literature, multiple databases and journal repositories were fully examined using a well-designed search strategy. My selection of platforms featured from Pakistani scholarly materials, for example, Google Scholar, ResearchGate, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, The Journal of Development and Social Sciences (JDSS) and the Allama Iqbal Open University journal records. Only recent and relevant studies from 2015 to 2025 were looked at to guarantee inclusion of the

most current research. A group of important keywords was applied to identify relevant materials. I searched for these combinations: "digital parenting" and "Pakistan," "restrictive parenting" and "children," "internet use" and "its effects on mental health," "limits on screen time" and "mental health," and "involvement" of parents and effects on child behavior. The keywords were adjusted many times to help get the most relevant and comprehensive search results.

The inclusion criteria were clearly defined before the review process. Only empirical studies—quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-method in design were considered for inclusion. These studies had to be conducted in the Pakistani context or contain data directly relevant to Pakistan. Each selected study was required to focus on digital parenting, specifically involving restrictive practices, and report psychological outcomes in children or adolescents between the ages of 6 and 18. The scope was limited to peer-reviewed journal articles or publications from reputable academic sources to ensure reliability. In contrast, studies were excluded if they were opinion pieces, conceptual articles, or news reports, or if they focused on general parenting without a digital component. Research conducted in countries other than Pakistan, unless directly applicable or comparative in design, was also excluded. The study selection process involved three stages. Initially, 46 articles were identified based on the search criteria. After reviewing titles and abstracts, 25 articles were shortlisted for full-text screening. During the final stage, 12 studies met all eligibility criteria and were selected for systematic analysis. This process is illustrated using the PRISMA flow diagram.

Identification of studies via databases and registers

Identificati

Records identified from:
Databases (n =46)

Records removed *before screening*:
Duplicate records removed (n =6)
Records marked as ineligible by automation tools (n = 0)
Records removed for other reasons (n = 2)

Records screened (n = 38)	→	Records excluded (n = 13)

Screening

Reports sought for retrieval (n = 25)	→	Reports not retrieved (n = 0)

Reports assessed for eligibility (n = 25)	→	Reports excluded: n= 13 Reason 1, n=11 (Irrelevant scope N= 5) Reason 2 (n = 2, incomplete methodology)

Studies included in review (n = 12)

Once the final sample was determined, a structured data extraction process was undertaken. A data extraction matrix was developed to record key characteristics of each study. This matrix included information such as the authors and year of publication, geographical location within Pakistan, sample demographics, methodological approach, type of digital parenting explored (with a focus on restrictive practices), psychological outcomes observed, and the key findings. This structured approach ensured consistency and facilitated thematic synthesis across studies. To analyse the findings, a thematic synthesis method was adopted. This approach allowed for the integration of both qualitative and quantitative evidence, enabling the identification of recurring patterns and themes within the data. Thematic synthesis is particularly

appropriate for social science research where multiple dimensions such as psychological, behavioural, and relational are interlinked. During this process, five core themes emerged across the selected studies.

THEMATIC FINDINGS

EMOTIONAL IMPACT OF RESTRICTIVE DIGITAL PARENTING

The findings repeatedly showed that reducing digital use can have a negative emotional effect on Pakistani adolescents. If parents applied strict choices and took away access to screens and explanations, kids might get angry, upset, depressed or anxious and eventually develop negative thoughts towards themselves or others. According to Seemi et al. (2023), high parental control is closely associated with above-average anxiety in school students from three peri-urban parts of Karachi. From the sample of 544 individuals, more than a third reported moderate to severe anxiety and how strict parents were was consistently linked to these outcomes. The analysis proves that strict and rigorous parenting without adding warmth or communication can cause challenges for adolescents, particularly in conservative societies (Sanvictores & Mendez, 2022).

A study by (Shahid et al., 2024) showed how parental involvement in using media affects both social media addiction and the way adolescents see their parents in Vehari district. The study found that restrictive mediation (e.g., banning apps or controlling online activity without context) was significantly associated with negative emotional responses and increased social media addiction. Adolescents subject to such parenting styles perceived their upbringing as controlling and unsupportive, which in turn amplified emotional distress and reduced trust in the parent-child relationship (Shahid et al., 2024). Supporting this, (Ali et al., 2024) conducted a thematic analysis on internet use and parental mediation in Pakistani households. Their interviews with parents revealed that restrictive digital control was often motivated by fear of online harm but lacked active communication with children. As a result, adolescents experienced emotional detachment and limited digital autonomy, which hindered their ability to build emotional resilience and digital literacy. All of these research papers show that tough digital restrictions, used without first listening to the child and trying to understand their feelings, can be deeply

upsetting to adolescents. Because cultural values often lead people in Pakistan to put obedience before talking, the chance of emotional withdrawal, increased anxiety and strained relationships increases greatly. For this reason, this overview shows that effective parenting in online spaces should focus on being connected, rather than just controlling children.

BEHAVIORAL RESPONSES AND COVERT DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

Many parents aim that restricting their children's digital use will protect them, but studies show that it is really the lack of thoughtful and caring conversations about screens that can be more harmful (Benedetto & Ingrassia, 2020). Households that either limit screen time too much or leave it completely open to kids often result in higher emotional and behavioral issues for children. A cross-sectional study by Suleman et al. (2021) conducted in four private preschools in Islamabad revealed that screen time exceeding 60 minutes per day was significantly associated with withdrawal symptoms, sleep problems, and autism spectrum tendencies among children aged 9–11 years. By using the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL) and a robust sample of 200 preschoolers, the study showed that longer screen exposure is directly related with higher emotional withdrawal (11.94 ± 3.91, $p = 0.014$) and disturbed sleep patterns (10.97 ± 3.20, $p = 0.010$). The authors mention that the study revealed that where both parents lacked emotional awareness and digital education, kids faced greater psychological challenges.

Building on this, Farooq and Bashir (2023) in their study concerning social work titled The Impact of Excessive Screen Time on Children's Development, point out that large amounts of unsupervised screen time are bad for both mental health and social interaction, as well as focus, attention span retention and cognitive development. The authors assert that over two hours of screen time per day leads to reduced thinking ability and family detachment, especially when parents fail to co-engage or offer meaningful offline alternatives. This aligns with the broader literature reviewed in this study: restrictive parenting alone is not enough if it lacks emotional presence, alternative engagement, and age-appropriate digital literacy (Ratri Rizki Kusumalestari et al., 2023). The studies indicate that the reason emotional consequences happen is not just due to parents over- or under-controlling their child's screen use, but rather when parents are too tough without support or too

hands-off. If attention is not given in either circumstance, a child's feelings, social life and actions suffer.

PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP STRAIN

Digital watchful parenting can lead to destroyed emotional bonds and ongoing tension between parents and children. Several of the studies found that not focusing on or mistreating children can weaken the parent-child connection. The authors found in their study that because of time constraints, many parents did not pay attention to their children's media activities. In their empirical study conducted in Islamabad, Munawar et al. (2023) found that many parents were unaware of their children's media habits due to limited daily interaction. According to the study, parents with jobs, even those who are highly educated and try hard, usually do not talk with their kids about their use of digital devices. Being unable to talk freely about these issues really hindered the chance for parents to be involved which eventually caused children to feel emotionally distant from their parents while using technology. Supporting this, Tahir et al. (2025) explored the influence of social media on familial interaction and reported that digital platforms often function as barriers to communication within families. Based on data from 101 respondents aged 15 to 31, the study revealed that when used passively or excessively, social media contributed to emotional detachment between parents and children. Although the researchers noted that social media could also be a tool for connection when used intentionally, in practice, it often replaced face-to-face conversations, further weakening relational bonds.

In addition, (Iqbal et al., 2022) revealed that kids whose devices were taken away felt not only restricted but also misinterpreted. As a result of these emotions, I started to be less open and stopped talking about both online and personal problems. Because of this, kids usually don't feel comfortable sharing their emotions and may avoid asking for help when something threatening happens online. Therefore, overprotective digital parenting, mainly when it's done without emotional support, can hinder trusting, open and safe relationships between parents and their children. All in all, research points out that not noticing or reacting to a child's emotions and online activities can also lead to problems in relationships when parents are very controlling.

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GENDERED DIGITAL RESTRICTIONS AND THEIR EMOTIONAL CONSEQUENCES

Pakistani cultural norms mean that who has access to technology is often determined by gender roles, which set the limits of freedom, movement and trust. Limiting screen time is enforced differently by digital parents which makes this group often feel less expressive and excluded. Siegmann (2018) shows in her study that how great the disparity in technology can be between men and women. In those villages where the network functioned, there was a rise in mobile phone ownership in surveyed families to 59%, but mostly men had control over their use. Fathers, husbands or brothers usually had to give permission before women or girls could place a call or use internet. Siegmann points out that not having digital rights often results from being expected to act modestly, obey and show control, not just the lack of equipment. Limiting girls in this way causes them to become emotionally dependent, lowers their self-confidence and makes it difficult for them to learn or express themselves safely online. In addition, Mustafa et al. (2023) looked into the digital privacy and harm that Pakistani teenagers face. Together with the Digital Rights Foundation, they tried to find out adolescents' perceptions on privacy and the restrictions they faced online by conducting interviews with 30 participants between 11 and 17 years old. According to what was found, young women experience digital surveillance and privacy infringements more often than others, sometimes by online strangers and sometimes by their own families. Most of the time, being constantly watched or not being allowed to talk about what was happening online made teenagers fearful, stressed out and self-censored. Girls felt that any "offending" behavior online could cause them disobedient in their family, making them feel more insecure mentally. Even if nothing serious happened, just the idea of a privacy breach online could harm a girl's family's standing and worsen tension in the family.

These studies demonstrate that gendered online rules do more than stop women online they inject ongoing emotional distress into women's lives. In Pakistan, girls usually experience digital parenting as someone always watching them, without trust and almost everything involving technology holds fear for them.

MENTAL HEALTH CONSEQUENCES AND IDENTITY

DEVELOPMENT

When parents closely monitor how their teen uses technology, it can affect their teen's moods, sense of who they are and social life. Between the ages of 10 and 18, youngsters begin to recognize who they are and how they feel. Providing the internet to kids who lack good guidance can result in stress, anxiety, depression and identity conflicts. Imran, Zaidi and Rehan (2024) conducted a study on the effect emotional issues have on Pakistani adolescents who use the internet too much. It showed that too much time spent online, when there is no structure or help, regularly caused less emotional maturity, resulting in more mental tension, avoiding others and becoming less active in general. By carefully studying Pakistani materials and considering the lack of digital literacy, the research found that teens often rely on the internet to connect with others emotionally, because other ways to do so are scarce. As a result, they claim that it negatively affects academic results, athletic performance and in the long run, emotional development as well and recommend support for good emotional control given frequent internet usage. Because of Internet Game Addiction becoming more common among youth in Pakistan, mental health is challenged directly. Fatima, Ambreen and Amin (2024) looked at the mental health status of 376 youth who play video games across Pakistan in a cross-sectional study. The study found that there were measurable differences in depression, anxiety and stress between gamers and non-gamers. In particular, gamers who played excessively scored higher on several measures of psychological health and this affected emotional control, attention and self-control mainly in boys aged 12-18. The findings highlight that IGD should be treated as both a conduct problem and a personal mental condition that escalates psychological stress and hurts someone's sense of self. This becomes even more complex when you consider parenting today online. When youngsters are regulated too strictly and punished, they feel less respected, have little freedom or feel isolated (Mestermann et al., 2025). Many mental problems in adolescents often result from not putting any limits on online gaming.

THEMATIC SUMMARY TABLE

The key themes presented below directly reflect the objectives of this review. Each theme addresses crucial aspects of how restrictive digital

parenting impacts the emotional, behavioral, relational, and developmental outcomes of children in Pakistan.

Theme	Key Issues Identified	Notable Studies Cited
Emotional Impact of Restrictive Digital Parenting	*Anxiety, emotional withdrawal, distress from unilateral digital control*	*Seemi et al. (2023); Shahid et al. (2024); Ali et al. (2024)*
Behavioural Responses and Covert Digital Engagement	*Secretive screen use, behavioural disruption, lack of parental co-engagement*	*Suleman et al. (2021); Farooq and Bashir (2023)*
Parent-Child Relationship Strain	*Emotional distance, reduced openness, punitive communication styles*	*Munawar et al. (2023); Tahir et al. (2025); Iqbal et al. (2022)*
Gendered Digital Restrictions and Their Emotional Consequences	*Disproportionate restrictions on girls, digital surveillance, emotional suppression*	*Siegmann (2008); Mustafa et al. (2023)*
Mental Health Consequences and Identity Development	*Stress, depression, reduced emotional maturity, impaired identity development*	*Imran et al. (2024); Fatima et al. (2024)*

DISCUSSION

Studies examined by the review indicate that using advanced electronic devices to monitor children and teens too closely can often hurt their mental health. According to the chosen studies, unhealthy emotions (Iqbal et al., 2022), varying reactions (Bibi et al., 2021), conflicts between parents and children (Shahid et al., 2024), digital gender issues (Siegmann, 2018) and general mental health problems show that Pakistani families should switch from strict discipline to listening, understanding and respectful conversations. The results confirm what Self-Determination Theory teaches in developmental psychology which says that autonomy, competence and being attached to others are essential for healthy development. If parents are very strict and do not talk with feelings, they

make it less likely for kids to decide on their own and to relate well to others (Deci & Ryan, 2022). As found in Seemi et al. (2023) and Shahid et al. (2024), such bans and having control over a teen's online time have been linked to youth anxiety, shyness and feelings of being cast aside. The analysis demonstrates that the impact of digital restriction can vary widely depending on how it is carried out. When we fail to understand, justify or negotiate while giving rules to kids, it can lead them to hide things, defy us and rely on the internet. Suleman et al. (2021) and Farooq and Bashir (2023) showed that too much or too little screen time can cause concerns with a child's mental and behavioural health. On the other hand, having parents work together and communicate clearly might help kids become emotionally mature with their screen use.

There is an extra gender problem when it comes to digital access in Pakistan. According to Siegmann (2008) and Mustafa et al. (2023), many digital barriers specifically affect girls in much the same way as broader traditions keep women from having freedoms. These regulations focus on more than just devices and expose errors in the system's control, monitoring and emotional repression. Fear, shame and controlling what we say can stay inside us and affect both our confidence and who we become. Furthermore, Imran et al. (2024) and Fatima et al. (2024) uncover that digital parenting must be understood alongside other parts of digital culture. There are costs from allowing kids to play games or spend time online without rules, much like the costs of being too firm. The reality, therefore, is that a combination of guidance and trust is better for emotional, digital and trusted development, rather than strictly either a restrictive or permissive approach.

LIMITATION

This review is limited by the small number of empirical studies available in Pakistan, the predominance of cross-sectional designs, and an urban sample bias. These factors may affect the generalizability of findings to more diverse populations.

CONCLUSION

The findings from this screening show that, in Pakistan, rigidly managing children's internet activities can cause mental health issues for them, mainly because the parent lacks emotional insight. Most of the reviewed

research points to increased anxiety, depression, emotional isolation, trouble with behavior and weaker bonds within the family. Wide-ranging inequalities mean girls are more likely to come under digital control, greatly affecting their freedom of expression, education and identity. Rather than treating digital parenting as a matter of enforcing control, it must be reframed as a space for relationship-building, mutual respect, and co-learning (Mascheroni et al., 2018). Emotional availability, age-appropriate negotiation, and digital literacy education are essential tools that parents need to effectively support their children in the digital age.

This review also identifies important gaps for future research. Most existing studies are cross-sectional and urban-focused. There is a need for longitudinal, rural, and gender-sensitive studies that explore not just outcomes, but pathways and protective factors. Furthermore, interventions, training programs, and culturally relevant parenting models should be developed and tested within Pakistan to foster healthier digital environments at home. Because technology is becoming more common in our lives, the way parents care for their children must adapt (Amaral et al., 2023). It recommends that parents, teachers, policy makers and mental health professionals in Pakistan accept that helping children digitally means encouraging their psychological safety, freedom and strength not only screen limits.

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND MENTAL HEALTH INTERVENTIONS

Programs meant to update the community on current issues should feature digital parenting. Little attention is given to how technology can affect people's emotional life and families when educational and IT policies focus on enabling digital access (Amaral et al., 2023). Schools, professionals and doctors should be encouraged to help parents learn digital ways to balance their emotions at home. Mental health professionals, educators and social workers should be aware that stress related to technology plays a major role in adolescent mental health. Both the problems of overuse and the feelings linked to digital screenings should be considered in treatment programs (Tariq Masri-zada et al., 2025). Programs designed for counselling family members should now address issues of digital conflict and the influence of gender and authoritarian ways of dealing with discipline at home.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Before anything else, it's important for parents to understand and use emotionally intelligent parenting digitally, by allowing explanation, empathy and decision-making together with their children. Checking in with your kids through open discussion helps show you trust and expect the same from them (Breiner et al., 2016). Besides, schools ought to add digital literacy and lessons about online safety to their lessons so students can think wisely while online and control the time they spend on their screens.

Community workshops educating parents should be widely available in all types of areas. The aim should be to help caregivers, primarily mothers learn about the dangers of using technology too much or too little and how to strike a balance between support and control (Apdillah et al., 2022). In the fourth place, there must be intentional plans to guarantee that girls in conservative or rural homes can share in digital opportunities that are largely controlled by males. Both new structures and new attitudes are needed through help and information.

Finally, the review highlights the need for future research to move beyond urban, school-based samples and include underrepresented populations, such as children in rural districts, out-of-school youth, and low-literacy families. Longitudinal studies exploring the long-term mental health outcomes of different digital parenting styles would also provide critical insights into how best to support Pakistani families in a rapidly digitizing world.

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