

Digital literacy among parents and how it leads to the consumption of media by their children in UAE

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Abstract:

We now live in a time where we spend most of our times in front of screens, not just entertaining ourselves, but as an essential part to function in our daily life. We use screens to study, work and communicate, Media screens and the digital world around us have evolved to the point of becoming a necessity that we can no longer avoid. This study aims to find out the levels of digital literacy among parents in the United Arab Emirates and examine how it may affect their children's literacy. It also examines parenting methods and attitude used to reduce and grow digital literacy and screen use among children. The paper uses Lank shear & Knobel (2008) Sociocultural theory as a base for the theoretical framework. The sociocultural theory argue that digital literacy consists of a "myriad of social practices and conceptions of engaging in meaning-making mediated by texts that are produced, received, distributed, exchanged, etc.," the way individuals engage and make meaning of situated practices is perceived as digital literacies. An in-depth survey was conducted to 62 parents using simple random sampling method among parents of children below or equal to the age of 14. Both quantitative and qualitative questions were included in the survey. The former consisted of yes-no questions as well as some behavioral questions, while the latter comprised of open-ended questions that aimed to encourage participants to explain their answers to gain context around the quantifiable data in a narrative form. According to the findings, the average percentage of the questions that were answered accurately was 62.43%.

Keywords: Digital literacy, media, screen time, parenting, parent digital literacy.

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Introduction

There is no doubt that everyone around the globe spends a considerable amount of time in front of media screens and devices. Media screens and the digital world around us have evolved to the point of becoming a necessity that we no longer can avoid. This digitalization of the world brought us comfort and entertainment, but it also changed our relationships and most importantly presented some challenges among parents and their children.

Societies in the 21st century are turning into a knowledge society that mixes many worlds together with the ease of accessing information (Gulbahar, Tinmaz & Kose, 2006). Therefore, these changes in our lives lead to digital skills becoming a necessity to function in society. A term as a result was born, the 'New Literacy'. But what is digital literacy? An exact definition of "digital literacy" is difficult to find as the term has been used in multiple meanings. The term is also linked to many different concepts such as computer literacy and media literacy. Furthermore, the rapidly changing technological environment and the popularity of the technology in question also add to the complexity of the matter.

Digital literacy is defined by The American Library Association (ALA) as "the ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information, requiring both cognitive and technical skills." Cornell University defines digital literacy as "the ability to find, evaluate, utilize, share, and create content using information technologies and the Internet."

In 1997, Paul Gilster noted that digital literacy is a form of mindset, stating that "digital literacy is about mastering ideas do not keystroke." Based on that, Media Awareness Network (2010) provided three key principles that are based on the definition digital literacy, which are as follows:

1- Knowledge and skills: to access and use a variety of digital items, whether hardware devices or software applications.

2- The ability to have critical analysis and understanding of digital content and applications.

3- The ability to create and contribute by using digital technology.

There is a difference between being familiar with technology and being literate in it, they are not the same thing. For example, someone young might have the technical skills involving the digital world but might lack the cognitive abilities to find, evaluate, create, and communicate in a manner that might be at the disposal of an older individual. Digital literacy is neither determined by age nor is a person born digitally literate (Becker 2019).

Taking into consideration how digital is key to our society's progression, the purpose of this research paper will be surrounding digital literacy levels among parents in the United Arab Emirates. The specific questions that the paper is trying to address are as follows: 1) Do parents in the United Arab Emirates understand the importance of digital literacy on their lives as well as their children's? 2) Do parents in the UAE have sufficient digital literacy? 3) What is the level of media access allowed to children in the UAE? 4) How often do parents in the UAE use media and screens around their children? 5) What parenting styles do parents in the UAE use to monitor and limit their children's use of digital devices in the UAE?

1. Literature review

1.1 The importance of digital literacy?

Digital skills nowadays are no longer an additional skill to have, but ‘the skill’ to have. Digital literacy is now identified and recognized alongside traditional literacies such as reading and writing as an essential skill to function in society (Healey et al., 2008). Teachers are encouraged to prepare students to develop digital literacy to increase their opportunities in the work field and improve their interaction within society (Corbel & Gruba, 2004). The importance of digital skills such as computer skills has been critical since 2004, Corbel and Gruba (2004) highlighted that computer skills are as important as language skills because students need it to communicate with society, interact with individuals around them, function properly in the workplace and learn new ideas.

Alkalai (2004) argues that digital literacy does not just involve understating and operating digital devices but also includes complex cognitive, sociological, and emotional skills. These skills are needed to function in an effective manner in our digital environment.

1.2 Styles of parenting

A study showed that parental styles have influence and direct effects on their children’s online media use. These styles for example could be the parent’s ability to monitor and control internet use among their kids (Mascheroni and Ólafsson, 2015). An example would be the data plan provided to children and their level of access to the internet. Research also highlights that parents own personal use of technology and their daily practices around devices such as computers and mobile phones have the potential to reflect on their children. Parent’s social media access and use is predictive as well of that of their children (Terras et al., 2016).

2.3 Styles of parenting in the internet era

These parenting styles have expanded to include internet use (Valcke et al., 2010). The new style reflects how parents are adjusting their parenting habits to the new home environment in the age of technology.

Parental mediation is a method used by parents to face these challenges presented by internet access and smartphones. Parental mediation is defined as “the diverse practices through which parents try to manage and regulate their children’s experiences with the media” (Livingstone et al., 2015). In other words, it is a strategy used by parents to control and supervise media use and access to content.

Livingstone et al. (2011) pointed out five different types of parental mediation that are used to regulate mobile and internet use. Her team studied children between the age of 9 to 16 years old from 25 European countries. The five types are:

- (1) Active mediation of internet use, in which parents are involved in their children’s online activity and are in an open discussion with them about the content they view.
- (2) Active mediation of internet safety, in which parents promote safe internet use.
- (3) Restrictive mediation, in which parents choose to limit access to the internet in terms of time and content.
- (4) Technical restrictions, parents in this type restrict and monitor online activities of their children’s by using technology filters.
- (5) Monitoring, which refers to parents who monitor their children’s online activities.

The study also highlighted that active mediation of internet safety was the most used type on children between the age of 9 to 16 years old while the restrictive type was more used for younger children. The study also highlighted that regardless of age, parents implemented higher parental mediation generally for their daughters than they did for their sons. Dürager and Livingstone (2012) state that both the active and restrictive mediation types are considered the best approach by parents as they help maximize online growth and opportunities while minimizing the risks associated with online activities.

2.4 Technological environment in the home

Children nowadays are experiencing an environment filled with technology within their homes. In the United Kingdom, one research studied 346 parents of children between the ages of 3 to 5 years old. The parents pointed out that their children interact with multiple technology devices at home ranging from mobile phones, computers, and games consoles. They also indicated that their children engage with techno-cultural activities such as phone conversations and chatting online (Plowman et al., 2012). Plowman also pointed out in the study that the technological environment surrounding children helps enable them to learn the skills needed to use technology. Furthermore, it also enables them to develop knowledge on content accessed from the media resulting in a better understanding of the world.

When it comes to the Arabic world, Dennis (2018) states that younger internet users are almost two to four times as likely as the older internet users to use Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter in a report that featured seven major Arabic countries (Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, and Lebanon). In the study, it was found that men in the countries have more followers and friends on major social media platforms than women do. Furthermore, internet users are twice as likely to share content about multiple topics when compared to five years ago, including news. The study also reported that individuals in the region spend more time on average weekly online when compared to watching TV, 30 hours to 19 hours respectively. At the least eight in ten nationals in most countries surveyed owned a smartphone (seven in two in Tunisia). Smart devices were no exception, devices such as smartwatches and smart home devices are also gaining popularity in the region, especially among individuals who are below the age of 35 with at least a secondary education.

2.5 Consequences of excessive internet use

It is important to find the relationship between parents' use of screen time and how it affects their children's behavior and screen time around these devices. The time spent on devices has been associated with negative effects on our well-being. For instance, one research found that lower depression levels are associated with lower screen time in both adults and children (Kremer et al., 2014). Furthermore, high levels of social media usage are associated with lower levels of happiness (Brooks, 2015) as well as increased levels of depression and sleep disorders in young adults (Lin et al., 2016). Daniela and Rudolfa (2018) recommend that children should be discouraged and warned from using digital media for as long as it is possible.

2.6 The influences of parents' use of media on their children's habits

There is no doubt nowadays that children are not only exposed to technology at a young age, but they also engage with it and parents play a major role in providing technology to children and enabling its use. Stephen et al. (2013) identified four dimensions within the home environment that differentiate children's experience with technology. They are as follows:

1- The general attitude of the family towards technology as an educational tool.

- 2- The general attitude of the family towards supporting their children's learning process.
- 3- Interactions within the family, including the presence of siblings.
- 4- Children's preferences and characteristics.

There is evidence to propose that it is possible to predict children's use of technology based on the use of their parents (Terras et al., 2016). In addition, the digital literacy of parents could also influence their children's literacy. Mubarak's study (2019) showcased how digital literacy could be transformed from parents to their children. The study highlights the importance of partners digital knowledge to prepare their young children for the future. The study also shows that children under the age of twelve were more likely to be influenced by their parent's digital literacy.

3 Theoretical Framework

3.1 Socio cultural theory:

According to Bawden (2008), there are multiple perspectives or divisions when it comes to digital literacies such as information literacy, media literacy, computer literacy, network literacy, and e-literacy.

Sociocultural theorists Lank Shear & Knobel (2008), argues that digital literacy consists of a "myriad of social practices and conceptions of engaging in meaning-making mediated by texts that are produced, received, distributed, exchanged, etc.," and due to that, the way individuals engage and make meaning of situated practices and texts is perceived as digital literacies. Digital literacy cannot be regarded as a singular social practice, but on the contrary, as an online social practice which takes many different shapes and forms such as social media and networking, blogs, discussion forums, memes, texting, and so on. Therefore, sociocultural approach shapes literacy as practices revolving around culture and social exercise, it is a combination of both the meanings and practices (Street, 2003). In this context, parents' actions of guiding their children on the use of digital media and the internet are influenced by cultural resources which are contingent and contextual (Plowman et al., 2010). Furthermore, research has shown that children develop while engaging with digital media skills and abilities that go beyond operational skills such as cultural understanding around literacy (Plowman et al., 2008). Specifically, traditional awareness and knowledge such as letters and words are now taught to children increasingly through digital means whether it was touchscreens, online or an app (Marsh et al., 2015).

4 Methodology

The paper's main method of collecting data was through a survey. The survey's headline had a letter of informed consent required prior to participating in the survey. It was administered using Google Forms, which enabled reports, charts and easy shareability for every participant. The survey included multiple questions that aimed to examine the participants' digital abilities. Furthermore, the survey tried to determine the following: the amount of time spent on digital devices, parents' attitudes towards digital literacy, as well as their parental mediation style used to regulate mobile and internet use among their children.

A simple random sampling method was employed among parents of children under or equal to the age of 14. The objective was to produce a random portion of parents within the United Arab Emirates with each member having an equal opportunity of being chosen in an unbiased manner. The participants were all parents' living within the United Arab Emirates.

A total of 62 individuals responded to the survey. Both quantitative and qualitative questions were included in the survey. The former consisted of yes-no questions as well as some

behavioral questions that were time-based scale on the use of digital devices, while the latter comprised of open-ended questions that aimed to encourage participants to explain their answers to gain context around the quantifiable data in a narrative form.

5. Description of the Data:

5.1 Participates information

Regarding the participants' demographic characteristics, (see Table 1).

Table 1. Demographic characters of the samples

Variable	Category	Percentage %
Gender	Female	51.6% (32 responses)
	Male	48.4% (30 responses)
Age	18-30	9.6% (6 responses)
	30-49	69.3% (43 responses)
	50 <	20.9% (20 responses)
Level of education	High school or Diploma	16.1 % (10 responses)
	Bachelor's degree	64.5% (40 responses)
	Master's degree	17.7% (11 responses)
	PhD	1.6 % (1 responses)
Nationality/citizenship	Arab	74.2% (46 responses)
	Western	11.3% (7 responses)
	Asia	14.5% (9 responses)
Professional level	Management	50% (51 responses)
	Executive	39.2% (40 responses)
	Technical	10.7% (11 responses)
Experience level	> 3 years	6.5% (4 responses)
	3 to 10 years	25.7% (16 responses)
	10 years <	67.7% (42 responses)
Children's age	0 to 7 years	53.7% (43 responses)
	8 to 14 years	46.2% (37 responses)

5.2 Ownership

Regarding parents' ownership of electronic devices (see table 2).

Table 2. Ownership of personal digital devices

What personal digital devices do you own?	Yes	No
PC or laptop	93.5%	6.5%
Tablet	48.4%	51.6%
Smartphone	90.3%	9.7%
Smart home devices	43.5%	56.5%

We find that their children's ownership of the devices does not equal that of their parents. (see table 3).

Table 3. Children's ownership of personal digital devices:

What personal digital devices do you own?	Yes	No
PC or laptop	43.5%	56.5%
Tablet	54.8%	45.2%
Smartphone	50%	50%
Smart home devices	14.5%	85.5%
No ownership of digital devices	17.7%	82.3%

5.3 Participants Self-assessment

Participants self-assessment of their digital skills are as follows (see table 4).

Table 4. Participants self-assessment of their own digital skills

How would you rate your skills in the following?	Low to mid competence	High competence
Computer literacy	63%	37%
Internet literacy	61.3%	38.7%
Social media literacy	69.4%	30.6%
Understanding of online privacy	71%	29%

5.4 Usage

Respondents (parents) and their children's' use of digital devices was as follows (see table 5 and 6).

Table 5. How often do you use the following device per day (excluding work)?

How often do you use the following device per day (excluding work)?	Few times per week	1-2 hours daily	3-4 hours daily	5 hours+ daily
Smartphone	3.1%	9.7%	58.1%	29%
Laptop	45.2%	24.2%	16.1%	14.5%

Table 6. How often do your children use the following devices (excluding schoolwork)?

How often do your children use the following devices?	Few times per week	1-2 hours daily	3-4 hours daily	5 hours+ daily
Smartphone/Tablet/Computer	22.6%	19.4%	35.5%	22.6%

With regards to parents using media devices around their children, 85.5% of participants said they did and 14.5% said they did not (see table 7).

Table 7. Do you use media devices around your children?

Do you use media devices around your children?	Yes	No
	85.5%	14.5%

5.5 Digital literacy evaluation

The next part of the survey consisted of questions aimed at evaluating participants' level of digital skill and literacy (see table 8). On average, 79.79% of participants responded with a "Yes" meaning they do know how to perform these tasks or that they do use it. While 20.21% said no.

Table 8. Skills, use and knowledge questions

Question:	Yes	No
Do you have a computer with internet connection at your home?	96.8%	3.2%
Do you have an email account outside of work?	95.2%	4.8%
Do you have a personal website?	16.1%	83.9%
Do you understand basic computer hardware components	79%	21%
Are you familiar with keyboard shortcuts?	80.6%	19.4%
Can you turn on and shutdown a computer in a proper manner?	95.2%	4.8%
Can you print any document using a printer?	95.2%	4.8%
Can you save files from the web?	93.5%	6.5%
Can you move files from a USB drive ?	96.8%	3.2%
Can you change the font style in a document	98.4%	1.59%
Can you find information that you are looking for online?	96.8%	3.2%
Can you install applications and software programs?	90.3%	19.7%
Can you record audio using your computer?	69.4%	30.6%

Can you create a web page?	30.6%	69.4%
Do you know how to scan a disk for viruses?	62.9%	37.1%

The second part consisted of qualitative questions that were open-ended and required explanations with the aim to establish parents' digital literacy levels (See table 9). Participants response accuracy came as follows, the average percentage of the questions that were answered accurately was 62.43%. While 38.26% was the average for the incorrect answers to the questions.

Table 9. Short answer questions – digital literacy assessment

Question:	Correct	Wrong
Explain what a folder is	69.6%	40.4%
What programs can edit a JPEG?	65.2%	34.8%
What is a GIF?	57.14%	42.86%
What is a pdf file?	64.2%	35.8%
What is a search engine?	76.6%	23.4%
What is a browser?	60%	40%
What is a .gov site?	94%	6%
What programs can edit a GIF?	47%	53%
What is spam?	57.3%	42.7%
What is a bookmark?	73.2%	26.8%
What is a Firewall?	40.3%	59.7%
What is Cache?	49%	51%
What is the bcc option in email?	76.3%	23.7%
What part of the computer is the brain?	31.4%	68.6%
What is a URL?	68%	32%
What is an output device?	69.6%	31.4%

5.6 Opinions

Following the questions, participants were asked opinion-based questions aimed to analyze their behavior and beliefs towards digital literacy and how much they valued it (see table 10).

Table 10. opinion based questions

Question	Agree	Disagree
In your opinion, should parents have high levels of digital knowledge?	88.7%	11.3%
In your opinion, do you consider digital knowledge important to your role as a parent?	90.3%	9.7%
In your opinion, does parents own digital knowledge reflect on their children's digital knowledge?	71%	29%

In your opinion, do you think your child's success in the workplace and social filed depends on their digital knowledge?	62.9%	37.1%
In your opinion, is excessive use of digital devices harmful to your children?	82.3%	17.7%
In your opinion, does a parent's own use of digital devices reflect on their children's usage time?	67.7%	32.3%
Do you agree with the following: Digital literacy is now identified and recognized alongside traditional literacies such as reading and writing as an essential skill to function in society?	80.6%	19.4%

When it comes to parenting styles, as pointed out in the literature, Livingstone et al. (2011) highlighted different types of parental mediation to regulate mobile and internet use among children. The survey comprised of questions that aimed to find which mediation type were used by parents.

Participants in the survey apply and believe in the following forms of mediation (see table 11):

(1) Active mediation: 64.5% of participants are actively involved in their children's online activity and are in constant discussion with them about the content they view.

(2) Active mediation of internet safety: 74.2% of participants promote safe internet use for their children.

(3) Restrictive mediation: 62.9% of participants limit their children's access to the internet in terms of time and content.

(4) Monitoring: and finally, 62.9% of participants monitor their children's online activities.

Table 11. Parenting style

Question	Agree	Disagree
I am involved in my children's online activity and are in an open discussion with them about the content they view.	64.5%	35.5%
I actively promote safe internet use to my children.	74.2%	25.8%
I limit my children's access to the internet in terms of time and viewed content.	62.9%	37.1%
I monitor my children's online activities.	62.9%	37.1%
I engage in supportive communication with my children about the use of media.	72.6%	27.4%
I engage in monitoring actions and negotiations with my children when it comes to accessing digital media.	64.5%	35.5%

Findings: Analyzed data from the survey based on the literature review**Parents personal use of digital devices**

In the survey, it was found that 85.5% of parents use digital devices around their children. Previous research highlighted that parents' own use of screen, and their daily practices around digital devices may reflect on their children (Terras et al., 2016). The survey supports that claim (see table 5 and 6) as reported use time between parents and children is almost identical on average per week when it comes to smartphones.

6. Value of digital literacy

The literature highlights Corbel and Gruba (2004), computer skills are becoming as important as language skills nowadays as we need them to communicate, interact, learn and work, alongside many more. Parents in the UAE tend to agree. Around 80% of parents surveyed believe that digital literacy is as important as traditional form of literacy (reading and writing). However, only 62.9% believe that their children's success in the workplace depends on their digital literacy.

6.1 Gender

Male participants in the UAE as per the survey were more knowledgeable when it comes to digital literacy. When it comes to participants levels of literacy, we notice some despair between male and female participants. On average, 65.30% of questions answered by male parents were correct. While 55.46% of all questions answered by women were correct.

When it comes to the differences between gender and their valuing of digital literacy, there was no major difference, but females tended to value it more. 90.6% of female participants believed digital literacy was important to their roles as parents (87.5% for males), while 65.6% believed that children's success in life depended on digital knowledge (71.8% for males), and 87.5% believed that digital literacy is as important as traditional literacy such as reading (71.8% for males).

6.2 Parenting style

In the description of the data, we noticed that 64.5% of parents used active mediation of internet use as their parenting style and 74.2% used active mediation of internet safety. The literature review indicates that active mediation was the optimal approach. In the survey, we find that parents who applied active mediation scored on average 61.7% when it comes to the digital literacy test, and 72.1% of them believed that parents digital literacy reflects on their children, 86.1% of them believe that digital literacy is as important as traditional literacies (reading and writing) to function in society. On the other hand, parents who were non active in their children online activity scored 60.1% in the literacy test, and 70% of them that their digital literacy

reflects on their children, and 65% believed that digital literacy is as important as traditional literacies. While the test scores and the belief that digital literacy reflects on children did not differ much, we notice that active parents who were surveyed value their children's digital literacy much more than those who were non active.

6.3 Job experience

We categorized parents based on their job experience level and analyzed their literacy levels based on the questionnaire in the survey. We also aimed to find out if the amount of experience a parent had affected how much they valued digital literacy in the lives of their children. The results of the digital literacy test varied a lot when categorized based on experience, we found that parents with three years or less of experience had an average of 34.4% accurate answers only, keeping in mind that the overall all result of the test had an average of 62.43% accuracy (See table 9). The number of parents with three years of experience or less is much lower than the other two categories as individuals with low career experience usually do not have children. The following two categories were parents with three to ten years of experience and parents with more than ten years. Their results in the test were similar with average scores of 64.1% and 63% respectively.

The next type of questionnaire in the survey (See table 10) was used to estimate how much parents value digital literacy and its role in the future lives of their children. Based on the categorization set previously, we found that the lower the experience, the less digital literacy was valued. (See table 12).

Table 12. Job experience level and parents value of digital literacy

Question	3 or less	3-10	10 & above
In your opinion, do you consider digital knowledge important to your role as a parent?	83.3%	94.4%	92.3%
In your opinion, do you think your child's success in the workplace and social field depends on their digital knowledge?	50%	77.7%	64.1%
Do you agree with the following: Digital literacy is now identified and recognized alongside traditional literacies such as reading and writing as an essential skill to function in society?	66.6%	77.7%	82%

6.4 Education level

The next step was categorizing parents based on their education level. Three categories were established, the first being High school (HS) or Diploma, followed by bachelor's degree, and finally, higher education (master's degree and PHD). Education levels showed a wide margin of gap between parent's test results as parents from the first category (HS or Diploma) scored

on average 47.2% correct answers. While bachelor's degree and higher education scored 62.9% and 64.71% respectively.

Similar results were noted when examining parents from the three categories and their valuing of digital literacy (see table 13).

6.5 Age

The data then was analyzed based on parents' age. The three categories were parents between the age of 18 to 29, and 30 to 49, and 50 and above.

When it comes to the questionnaire results, no coloration was found when it comes to the participants' age. The results came as follows; on average, parents between the age of 18 to 29 scored 54.9% correct answers. While parents between the age of 30 to 49 scored on average 64.6% correct answers. Finally, parents above the age of 50 answered 49.3% of the questions correctly on average.

Parents between the age of 30 to 49 also had the highest results when it comes to valuing the importance of digital literacy (See table 14).

6.6 Self-assessment

Participants' self-assessment of their own digital skills was inaccurate, participants ranked their digital skill below what it actually is. Between 60% to 70% ranked themselves as low to mid competence. While the results of the technical questions aimed to identify that showed that only 62.43% of questions were answered correctly (see table 4 and 9). The average self-assessments parents believed to have when it comes to computer, internet, social media, and online privacy literacies equaled 66.175%. Still above what they scored.

7. Limitations and Discussions

The aim and purpose of the study was to find out a general or base understanding regarding the following aspects of parents in the United Arab Emirates: parents' own level of device use and that of their children, their digital literacy levels, and finally, their parenting styles and methods to manage the use of digital devices by their children.

There are a lot of difficulties surrounding the process of creating accurate digital literacy assessment and understanding exact parental styles reading. These challenges are due to the fact that there are multiple types of digital literacy assessments. Furthermore, adding context when determining digital literacy adds to the difficulty of establishing accurate results. Parents also tend to be protective when asked about their children.

Some of the challenges and obstacles that slowed down the study occurred during the survey as hundreds of parents were reluctant to take part in answering the questionnaire. Therefore, despite the wide variety of participants' background and characteristic, the number of

completed survey was relatively limited. The overall quality of responses to open-ended questions were also relatively concerning in the quality department.

Another discussion points and perspective on the limitations of the study is the inconsistency when it comes to the definition of the term “digital literacy”. As highlighted in the introduction section, digital literacy is defined in multiple different ways such as some prioritizing the technical aspects while others perceiving it as a form of cognitive social aspect. As highlighted as well in the introduction, the term is frequently evolving as well and is subject to changes with the rapid changes in the technology sector.

Future detailed research is needed when it comes to parenting practices and to digital devices and online safety, especially when it comes to their parenting styles and behavior towards digital devices around their children. A bigger sample size is needed as well, this is important given how parents’ own behavior, habits and digital literacy can be reflected on their children.

Future research is also needed when it comes to devices that are currently on the surface as this sector is always evolving. Devices such as VR and augmented reality and metaverses all should be examined.

Conclusion

In this study we examined digital literacy among parents in the United Arab Emirates, exploring their understanding and knowledge on the matter, how much they value it, and their interactions with the digital space. Furthermore, we explored their parenting styles and habits towards digital literacy. There is no doubt that digital literacy is now a key contributor (and growing in importance) to our lives within society and a determining factor in an individual’s success through life. While many participants had high levels of digital literacy and understood its value, we still need to educate the public on its importance and prioritize it in schools and educational insinuations. Parents should also be directed to the most effective ways to parents and moderate children’s screen time and habits around digital device to maximize their growth while minimizing the risks associated with it.

Our review identified the following findings: (1) more than 85% of parents use digital devices around their children. (2) around 80% of parents surveyed believe in the importance of digital literacy. (3) 62.9% of parents believe that their children’s success in the workplace depends on their digital literacy. (4) Male participates had an average digital literacy score of 65.30%, while had a score of 55.46%. (5) With regards to parenting styles, 64.5% of parents used active mediation of internet use and 74.2% used active mediation of internet safety. (6) Parents with more years of job experience value digital literacy more than parents with lesser experience. (7) On average, parents with higher education levels had a higher digital literacy score. Furthermore, the higher the parents’ educational levels, the more they value digital literacy. (8) Parents self-assessment of their own digital skills was inaccurate, the average score of all participants was 62.43%.

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