
Miscellaneous

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Conditioning and predictive factors of Spanish families' digital and media practices applied with their children

Abstract

Educating is currently more difficult than in the past due to these social networks (Instagram, YouTube or TikTok) and technology, as electronic devices (smartphones, tablets or laptops). Families are fundamental actors in primary socialisation and in the use of media by minors, but the role of parents in their children's relationship with new media is a field that needs to be further explored in depth. This study aims to identify which sociodemographic factors intervene in the activation of digital and media parenting practices of Spanish families (involvement, positive parenting, poor supervision, inconsistent, appropriate and strict discipline) (e-APQ). This study is framed within a quantitative, non-experimental, cross-sectional, descriptive and inferential research design. A stepwise multiple linear regression has been included. A questionnaire containing sociodemographic variables relating to parents and children, as well as the e-APQ dimensions, was applied to 978 Spanish families. Results show that sociodemographic factors (sex of parents and children, educational stage of children's schooling, mother's occupation and father's educational level) influence the digital and media parenting practices. The educational stage of schooling of the first child, parental involvement and appropriate discipline are predictors of positive parenting. Families need to develop digital, media and parenting skills that enable them to critically analyze content circulating on social networks sites to ensure the

protection and rights of children in the framework of positive parenting. These efforts must be led by means of a specific public policy based on scientific evidence, the technology industry, media, regulatory councils and educational institutions, among others.

Keywords

Digital practices, media practices, parental practices, communication, social networks, e-APQ.

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1. Introduction

The digitalisation of society is an indisputable fact and the family, as one of its systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1986), does not escape this process. The family is the first context for the development of children and, increasingly, it is evolving in its structure, in the relationships established between its members and in the parental practices that parents carry out, among other aspects. Currently, these practices are being extended to the digital and media environment, which complicates further the exercise of parenting.

According to Fardouly et al. (2022), most of the research that has been conducted has focused on parental modelling in the use of digital media by minors and on parental control or digital mediation in the use of media by minors (Garmendia et al., 2020). However, there is little research that addresses other aspects such as specific digital parenting practices or predictive models that integrate different types of variables. Therefore, this study aims to identify which factors intervene in the activation of certain digital parenting practices of Spanish families with respect to their children's use of social networks sites and consumption of digital content.

1.1. *The challenge of families in a digitalised society*

The transformation of society in different areas is an indisputable fact, accelerated by the globalisation process and linked to technological, digital and media changes. The Social Networks Study (IAB Spain, 2024) indicates that the Spanish population between 12 and 74 years of age (35.5 million) is an Internet user (94%) and a user of social networks sites (86%). This data provokes an impact on people's lives, on new family configurations and on the exercise of parental roles.

According to Perales-Montolío et al. (2022), the concept of family is dynamic, transforming as a consequence of changes and the response to them in aspects such as: forms of communication (Elias et al., 2020), concealment and secrecy of information managed by minors (Beyens et al., 2024), norms and relationships that are generated among family members by the incorporation of digital devices and their applications in daily routines (Zinoveva et al., 2024). The use of technologies within the domestic sphere, for example, can lead families to occupy the same physical space, but be cognitively separated (Elias et al., 2021). In this sense, the family can be configured as a context that offers the child not only affection, socialisation, protection or satisfaction of needs (Kapella et al., 2021) but also conflicts and/or risks depending on their own characteristics.

For Adigwe (2021), digital technologies could have improved the parenting process, as they cause a great impact on parenting practice (Graber, 2019). However, parents state that educating is more difficult today than in the past because of social networks and technology (Golob et al., 2023; Livingstone et al., 2017). These are key players in primary socialisation and children's use of traditional media (Alt & Boniel-Nissim, 2018). However, it is necessary to go deeper into the practices developed in the family in relation to digital and media ecosystem.

1.2. *The exercise of digital and media parenthood*

The concept of parenthood refers to the activities carried out by parents to care for their children and promote their socialisation (Perales-Montolío et al., 2022). On its part, the Appendix to Recommendation 19 of the Committee of Ministers to member states (Council of Europe, 2006) establishes that the exercise of parenthood entails rights and obligations for which one must be qualified.

Barudy and Dantagnan (2010) distinguish two forms of parenthood: biological (procreation) and social (capacities to care, protect, educate and socialize). The latter situates parentality in the mobilization of certain competencies on the part of parents, skills that are not attributed to the fact of biological parenthood. These parental competencies are reflected in the specific parenting practices that they apply and that directly influence the actions of the children (Leung & Tsang Kit Man, 2014) or as mechanisms directly employed by the families to favor the socialization of the child (Goldberg et al., 2021).

Parenting practices, as opposed to traditional parenting styles, can be easier to modify (Pascual-Sánchez et al., 2021) and, therefore, to educate and redirect them, as they include behaviours such as parental involvement with minors, positive parenting (stimulation and affection, clear and focused praise, support for increasing autonomy, encouragement of healthy habits, setting goals and firm rules and consequences) (De Stone et al., 2016), supervision, inconsistent discipline, and the use of corporal punishment (Zlomke et al., 2013), i.e., parental practices related to the dimensions analyzed in this study. These parenting behaviours, therefore, can be positive or negative and correlate with various behavioural outcomes of minors (Chen & Raine, 2018).

Thus, it is necessary to have instruments that allow measuring these parenting practices. An example of this is the Alabama Parenting Questionnaire (APQ) (Shelton et al., 1996), translated into more than nine languages, including Spanish (Escribano et al., 2013), characterized by positive psychometric properties in several studies (Burlaka et al., 2025) and valued as one of the best questionnaires to assess specific parenting practices (Morsbach & Prinz, 2006). Its adaptation to the digital context (Ramírez-García et al., 2021) allows the evaluation of six dimensions of specific parental practices in this context: positive (positive parenting, parental involvement, and appropriate discipline) and negative (poor supervision, inconsistent discipline and severe discipline).

Positive parenting practices, such as praise and compliments, are positively related to child prosocial behaviours and reduce the passive influence of externalizing problems (Ludmer et al., 2017). Negative parenting behaviours, such as strict and inconsistent discipline, are associated with greater externalizing problems and child behavioural difficulties (Dittman et al., 2014).

For Konok et al. (2020), there are direct and indirect links between parenting practices and children's behaviour. The direct ones are linked to the establishment of norms (appropriate discipline) or parental supervision of their children's behaviour, while the indirect ones are linked to the creation of the family environment (promoting certain behaviours and not others), parental attitudes and behaviour (role modelling) and the creation of a socioemotional environment of support (parental involvement). It should also be noted that parenting remains a gendered activity, even in the digital realm (Livingstone et al., 2017; Okorn et al., 2023; Sasson & Mesch, 2016).

Only a few decades ago, parenting practices were carried out in a physical context, now they also must be activated in a digitalised environment, becoming timeless (Lim, 2018) and giving rise to a transcendent parenthood, a state in which parental obligations seem perpetual and with few possibilities of rest.

It is not surprising that parents are exhausted, as "good parenting" in today's media context is complex, multifaceted and requires a large investment of time (Page-Jeffery, 2021) to go beyond simply limiting screen time and activating filters to access inappropriate content. Positive parenting can be constituted, according to Okorn et al.

(2022), by supportive practices, stimulation, positive discipline and structure, which depend on the age of the child and the sex of the parents, and which, according to different authors (Vossen et al., 2024) are related to fewer symptoms of problematic media use.

At the same time, parenting is hindered by cultural values, norms and beliefs, as well as the parents' level of literacy (Golob et al., 2023), a factor that may also depend on the sociodemographic characteristics of the families (Adigwe, 2021; Mascheroni & Zaffaroni, 2023), including socioeconomic status (Konok et al., 2020). In this sense, the media literacy of parents would allow them to regulate, monitor and guide the use of media by minors, since parents have the duty to shape the technological and digital environment, at least at home, in which their children will grow up and to implement the necessary mechanisms to ensure that the relationship with digital media is a positive one. Within the framework of parental self-efficacy has been related to greater parental warmth (Izzo et al., 2000), greater responsiveness (Bogenschneider et al., 1997) or greater parental involvement (Jones & Prinz, 2005). For their part, Liu and Ma (2019) have shown that lack of parental involvement is also related to adolescents' problematic behaviour on the Internet.

Thus, different studies show the high degree of responsibility that families have in the consolidation of digital and media habits in children, who are increasingly hyperconnected from a very early age (Beyens et al., 2024; Feijoo & Sádaba, 2022; Golob et al., 2023; Torrecillas-Lacave et al., 2020).

Likewise, the exercise of parenting practice involves the education of children. However, Torrecillas-Lacave et al. (2020) state that parents do not usually have a defined and stable educational pattern, so that contradictions often arise, especially when it comes to media education, since they do not have previous references to deal with it and due to the characteristics of the media, which are ubiquitous and personal.

On the other hand, family routines generate a link between the individual and systemic levels of the family (Swendeman et al., 2020). These routines can be a protective factor for the child in relation to personal media use by establishing guidelines and rules in the home to be followed by the family (appropriate discipline). If the rules are unclear, inconsistent or constantly vary according to the parents' moods, then they could become a distorting factor in the child's development. Therefore, the discipline exercised by parents is considered another factor to be valued (Okorn et al., 2022), as it has been evidenced that mothers tend to apply disciplinary methods more frequently than fathers and that these depend on the educational level of the parents (Gámez-Guadix & Almendros, 2015; Sasson & Mesch, 2016).

An important issue in the application of disciplinary methods is the establishment of rules, but beyond the existence of rules at home, the enforcement or non-enforcement of these rules and the application of consequences for non-compliance are crucial. In this sense, inconsistent discipline (Lee & Kim, 2021) and strict discipline (Wang et al., 2023) correlate with a higher number of symptoms of problematic social network use or with lower parent-adolescent relationship quality (Peebles & Chen, 2024).

Along with routines, norms, the latter being the focus of parental control and social control theory (Lewis & Butterfield, 2005), and the discipline, the scientific literature has identified certain strategies that parents employ in this family interaction with digital media, including mediation and supervision (Beyens et al., 2022; Cash et al., 2022; Vossen et al., 2024), contributing to a new kind of digital divide for minors (Odgers & Jensen, 2020).

Torrecillas-Lacave et al. (2020) has shown that mediation depends on the age of the child, being practically non-existent in the first years of life, becoming restrictive before the age of 13 and non-existent after that age, when it should become active and based on dialogue. In the same direction, studies by Okorn et al. (2022) indicate that the age of the child moderates the association between positive parenting practices (support, stimulation, positive discipline and structure) and young children's socioemotional difficulties.

Likewise, Torrecillas-Lacave et al. (2020) observe a great deficiency in terms of the monitoring and supervision that families should provide through advice, dialogue, concern for the difficulties they may encounter on the Internet or knowledge of the child's behaviour on the Internet and/or with technologies.

In this sense, it has been shown that adolescents who perceive greater parental supervision in relation to digital media manifest a more positive relationship with their parents (Khurana et al., 2015), although it has been shown that this type of strategies differ depending on the age (Cash et al., 2022; Padilla-Walker et al., 2020) and sex of the minor (Chan et al., 2015; Evans et al., 2020). A consistent statement in research is that if minors are on the Internet they need parental supervision (Krämer & Schäwel, 2020).

On the other hand, despite the fact that conversations about the Internet in the family are related to higher levels of autonomy (Steinfeld, 2021) and self-regulation competences (Chen & Chng, 2016), reduction of problematic Internet use (Alt & Boniel-Nissim, 2018; Chen & Shi, 2018; Livingstone et al., 2017; Steinfeld, 2021), decrease in the secrecy of the information they consume and share on the Internet (Beyens et al., 2024) or FOMO (Alt & Boniel-Nissim, 2018) in minors. In Spain parents never or almost never dialogue with their children about what they do on the Internet (Dans & Muñoz-Carril, 2021), causing low levels of parental involvement (Alt & Boniel-Nissim, 2018). Thus, there is a group of families with a low level of parental demands, who abandon the responsibility entrusted to them in relation to the child's education.

For their part, Torrecillas-Lacave et al. (2017) point out that these families ignore the influence that technologies and the Internet have on their children and look the other way when it comes to the behaviour of minors in the media. Other families practice phubbing with their own children (Elboj-Saso et al., 2024). This lack of parental responsibility is based on arguments such as that minors are "digital natives" and do not require training, that the family has lost authority to guide minors in a digital context or that the characteristics of the devices prevent parental supervision and control (Suárez-Álvarez et al., 2020).

In this way, a digital parenting style is configured, which influences not only the time children spend with digital media, but also how and what they use them for. According to Konok et al. (2020), this digital parenting style transcends digital parental mediation, as it includes the amount of guidance and involvement in the use of digital devices received by minors.

Families, therefore, are undergoing a process of digital and media transformation that originates transcendental changes in the exercise of parenthood, for as Buchner and Wierzbicka (2018) express, digital parenting modifies parenting practices and family relationship patterns. Authors such as Alt and Boniel-Nissim (2018), Torrecillas-Lacave et al. (2020) or Schmuck (2021) declare the need to increase the number of investigations that address these issues. Thus, it would be necessary to conduct studies that go beyond the analysis of specific actions carried out in the family to control, supervise and/or

exercise digital mediation with minors in their relationship with electronic devices, the Internet and the digital content they produce and consume through them, and that delve deeper into holistic parenting practices, as well as factors that predict them.

In this sense, the study's objectives were (a) to identify which sociodemographic factors intervene in the activation of certain digital parental practices of Spanish families regarding the use of social networks sites and consumption of digital content by their children and (b) to explore a predictive model based on them and on specific dimensions of the *e*-APQ. In accordance with these objectives and the theoretical review, the following research hypotheses are proposed:

H1. Digital and media parenting practices are conditioned by sociodemographic factors.

H2. Sociodemographic factors and *e*-APQ dimensions are predictors of positive digital parenting.

2. Methodology

2.1. Design

This study is framed within a quantitative, non-experimental, cross-sectional, descriptive and inferential research design (Sáez-López, 2017). The technique used was a survey and the instrument used was a questionnaire. According to Bisquerra (2009), this allows information to be collected from a significant number of the population and statistical representativeness to be obtained.

2.2. Data procedure and analysis

The online questionnaire was sent to families' associations and educational centres of different educational stages in Spain via e-mail. The research did not need to be approved by an ethics committee because the questionnaire did not include questions that could compromise the integrity of the participants.

Participants twice expressed their willingness to participate voluntarily in the research, before starting the questionnaire by means of an informed consent form and at the end of the questionnaire by means of a question asking them to include the name of the school or families' association if they wanted it to appear in subsequent publications.

They were also informed that if at any time they wished to withdraw permission, they could do so by sending an email to the email address provided for this purpose. The anonymisation of data and the safekeeping of data were also reported.

The acknowledgements section includes all the families' associations that wished to participate in the research and in the publication of results.

Data analysis was carried out using SPSS v.27, using descriptive statistics (percentages, mean and standard deviation), the Mann Whitney U and Kruskal Wallis tests for inferential analysis (Field, 2009) because the sample distribution did not meet normality parameters, effect size (Hedge's *g*), as well as a stepwise multiple regression analysis.

2.3. Participants

The participating sample consisted of 978 inhabitants from the 17 Spanish regions and 2 autonomous cities. According to the simple random sampling criterion for infinite samples, populations larger than 100,000 subjects, as in this case (INE, 2022), this sample is statistically significant with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 3.12%.

The sample was made up of 80% women and 20% men. In terms of age, 1.2% were under 25 years of age, 5% between 26 and 34, 47.5% between 35 and 44, 42.2% between 45 and 54, 3.9% between 55 and 64 and 0.1% over 64 years of age. Other sociodemographic characteristics linked to the variables showing statistically significant differences between groups are expressed in Tables 1a and 2a (Annex).

2.4. Tool and variables

The questionnaire applied is a validated adaptation (Ramírez-García et al., 2021) of the Spanish version of APQ-Parents Version (Servera, 2007) and the short version of the same (Servera, 2019) but focused on digital and media parenting (*e*-APQ).

The first three scales include items on the positive communication established with children in their relationship with electronic devices and the digital and media content they consume. For example, in parental involvement (I talk to my children about YouTubers, followers, haters...), in positive parenting (I let my children know that what they do on YouTube / Instagram is appropriate for their age) and in appropriate discipline (I calmly explain to my children why their behaviour was wrong for inappropriate consumption of content or inappropriate use of the connection to the device).

The other three scales incorporate items on negative communication or lack thereof, for example, on poor supervision (I don't tell my children about my experiences of digital and media content), on inconsistent discipline (I threaten to punish my children for inappropriate content consumption or inappropriate use of the device connection) and strict discipline (I shout or yell when my children have inappropriately consumed content or inappropriately used the device connection).

All the scales were Likert-type and their values were 1. *Never*, 2. *Almost never*, 3. *Sometimes*, 4. *Almost always* and 5. *Always*. The number of items for each dimension is shown in Table 1. The overall Cronbach's alpha obtained in this study was $\alpha=.816$, this was slightly lower than that achieved in the pilot sample $\alpha=.897$, but in line with other studies that have employed the primitive version.

The sociodemographic variables included in the questionnaire referred to parents (sex, age, educational level and occupation) and children (sex and educational stage of schooling [age]).

3. Results

3.1. Descriptive overview of parenting practices and sociodemographic factors

The results of the study are presented below. Firstly, Table 3a (Annex) shows the means of the different scales that make up the questionnaire, highlighting that the responses of Spanish families are above the mean established for them regarding parental involvement, positive parenting and appropriate discipline. In relation to poor supervision, inconsistent and strict discipline of Spanish families with respect to their children's digital behaviour, levels below the mean of the scales are shown.

The sociodemographic variables that showed statistically significant differences were the sex of the parent and the child, the age of the respondent, the educational level of the father, the occupation of the mother and the educational stage of the first three children (see Tables 4a and 5a).

The sex of the parent conditions the exercise of parenting in all dimensions, except for inconsistent discipline. Females are those who present a higher mean than males in parental involvement, positive parenting, appropriate and strict discipline. In contrast,

males show the highest degree of poor supervision (Table 1). The effect size ranges, according to Sawilowsky (2009), from small to small, but not trivial.

Table 1. Mean (M), standard deviation (SD) and effect size (sex variable)

Dimensions	Sex	N	M	SD	Effect size (Hedge's g)
Parental involvement	Female	587	21.60	6.34	.32 (2)
	Male	146	19.58	6.05	
	Total	733			
Poor supervision	Female	584	7.23	2.93	.26 (2)
	Male	146	8.03	3.31	
	Total	730			
Positive parenting	Female	586	9.03	3.55	.25 (2)
	Male	146	8.16	3.36	
	Total	732			
Appropriate discipline	Female	576	6.97	2.60	.17 (1)
	Male	146	6.51	2.59	
	Total	722			
Strict discipline	Female	576	4.06	1.32	0.15 (1)
	Male	146	3.86	1.29	
	Total	722			

(1) Small; (2) Small, but not trivial.

Source: Own elaboration.

Likewise, the sex of the child is a conditioning factor in the parental involvement of the parents, especially in the case of the first child. In this sense, it is interesting to note that there is a higher degree of parental involvement with respect to daughters ($M = 21.70$, $SD = 6.43$, $g = .18$) than sons ($M = 20.59$, $SD = 6.14$), while poor supervision is greater in sons ($M = 7.66$, $SD = 3.15$, $g = .19$) than in daughters ($M = 7.11$, $SD = 2.84$). Although no statistically significant differences were found in the sex of the second child, in the case of the third child these differences were found in relation to appropriate discipline, also with higher levels in girls ($M = 7.75$, $SD = 2.26$, $g = .50$) than in boys ($M = 6.48$, $SD = 2.48$).

The age of the parent is a conditioning factor in two dimensions: poor supervision and positive parenting exercised by the parents. In the case of the former, Table 2 shows that the lowest supervision means are found in the 26-34 age group, compared to the 45-54 age group, possibly because the children are younger and would require greater supervision. However, the age range between 35 and 44 years old reaches the highest levels of poor supervision.

Nevertheless, this situation contrasts with a higher mean of this age group in terms of the development of positive parenting. The 35-44 age bracket is that which simultaneously and paradoxically manifests higher means in poor supervision of their children and the application of positive parenting in their children.

Respect to the father's educational level, Table 5a (Annex) shows statistically significant differences in relation to the parental involvement dimension, but the group contrast tests did not establish between which ones occurred.

As far as the mother's occupation is concerned, it fundamentally affects the development of positive parenting and appropriate discipline. Mothers who are public

employees (civil servants) show low means of positive parenting in relation to other occupations. Appropriate discipline is exercised to a greater degree by unemployed mothers than by mothers who are self-employed, employees and public employees (see Table 2).

Table 2. Mean, standard deviation and effect size (age and mother's occupation variable)

Variables	Contrast statistics	Error	Contrast Statistic Deviation	Sig.	Sig. adj.	M (SD)	Effect size (Hedge's g)
Age-Poor supervision	-132.423	39.784	-3.329	.001	.013	Between 26 & 34=6.6 (3.65) Between 45 & 54=8.0 (2.95)	.48
	-91.341	16.094	-5.675	.000	.000	Between 35 & 44=6.79 (2.88) Between 45 & 54=8.0 (2.95)	.42
Age-positive parenting	53.964	16.225	3.326	.001	.013	Between 35 & 44=9.28 (3.56) Between 45 & 54=8.33 (3.36)	.27
Mother's occupation - Positive parenting	-130.008	41.677	-3.119	.002	.038	PE =8.56 (3.56) Others=10.85 (3.18)	.65
Mother's occupation - Appropriate discipline	-110.865	35.887	-3.089	.002	.042	SE =6.53 (2.75) UN =7.90 (2.36)	.53
	-94.427	28.714	-3.277	.001	.022	EM =6.79 (2.6) UN=7.90 (2.36)	.43
	-93.623	29.352	-3.190	.001	.030	PE= 6.81 (2.53) UN=7.90 (2.36)	.44

UN= Unemployed; EM= Employee; PE= Public employee (civil servant); SE= Self-employed.

Source: Own elaboration.

As can be seen in Table 3, the educational stage of the children's schooling is a factor that influences different dimensions of the *e*-APQ. In this sense, the educational stage of the first child influences all the dimensions, except strict discipline; while that of the second child influences all but strict discipline and inconsistent discipline. The educational stage of the third child only influences positive parenting and appropriate discipline.

If we focus on the educational stage of the first child, Table 3 shows in relation to poor supervision that the means are higher as the stage of schooling is higher, i.e., the higher the stage at which the first child is in school, the higher the levels of poor supervision. Positive parenting is in the opposite situation; it is higher in the primary education stage, compared to secondary education, high school and university. Inconsistent discipline is greater among parents whose first child is in high school than in kindergarten. Although there are significant differences between the educational stage of the first child and appropriate discipline and parental involvement, it was not possible to distinguish between which groups. The effect size in most cases is from a medium-moderate level, reaching a very large effect between the poor supervision variable and the children's educational stage of schooling.

Table 3. Mean, standard deviation and effect size (variable educational stages of schooling of the first child).

Variables	Contrast statistics	Error	Contrast Statistic Deviation	Sig.	Sig. adj.	M (SD)	Effect size (Hedge's g)
1 st child educational stage - Poor supervision	-288.266	83.209	-3.464	.001	.001	UN = 4.71 (1.89) UY = 8.30 (2.41)	1.59 (5)
	-312.492	81.928	-3.814	.000	.003	UN = 4.71 (1.89) BA = 9 (3.22)	1.37 (5)
	-313.317	90.940	-3.445	.001	.012	UN = 4.71 (1.89) VT = 8.61 (2.30)	1.75 (5)
	-100.237	25.095	-3.994	.000	.001	EE = 5.96 (3.11) PE = 7.08 (2.91)	.38 (2)
	-145.929	26.282	-5.552	.000	.000	EE = 5.96 (3.11) SE = 7.68 (2.86)	.58 (3)
	-224.570	35.330	-6.356	.000	.000	EE = 5.96 (3.11) BA = 9 (3.22)	.96 (4)
	-225.395	52.971	-4.255	.000	.000	EE = 5.96 (3.11) VT = 8.61 (2.30)	.88 (4)
	-124.333	29.954	-4.151	.000	.001	PE = 7.08 (2.91) BA = 9 (3.22)	.65 (3)
1 st child educational stage - Positive parenting	133.248	33.577	3.968	.000	.002	PE = 9.82 (3.28) UY = 7.56 (3.45)	.68 (3)
	132.117	30.204	4.374	.000	.000	PE = 9.82 (3.28) BA = 7.6 (3.28)	.68 (3)
	109.873	18.579	5.914	.000	.000	PE = 9.82 (3.28) SE = 8.03 (3.44)	.53 (3)
1 st child educational stage - Inconsistent discipline	-109.165	34.551	-3.160	.002	.033	EE = 307.38 BA = 416.55	.48 (2, 3)

UN = Unschooled; EE = Early Childhood Education; PE = Primary Education; SE = Secondary Education VT = Vocational Training; BA = Baccalaureate; UY = University.

Effect size (Hedges' g): (2) Small, but not trivial; (3) Medium-moderate; (4) Large; (5) Very large.

Source: Own elaboration.

The educational stage of schooling of the second child influences parental involvement, being higher when the child studies Primary Education than in Secondary Education; in poor supervision, being higher the higher the stage of schooling of the child; in positive parenting, showing a higher mean in the Infant Education stage than in Secondary Education and Baccalaureate; and in appropriate discipline, but it has not been established between which educational levels (Table 4). Again, it is the poor supervision variable that shows a large or very large effect size with respect to the educational stage of schooling, in this case, of the second child.

Table 4. Mean, standard deviation and effect size (variable educational stages of schooling of the second child)

Variables	Contrast statistics	Error	Contrast Statistic Deviation	Sig.	Sig. adj.	M (SD)	Effect size (Hedge's g)
2 nd child educational stage -Parental Involvement	58.477	17.625	3.318	.001	.025	PE = 22.32 (6.05) SE = 20.06 (5.67)	.38 (2)
2 nd child educational stage - Poor supervision	-150.582	45.854	-3.284	.001	.029	UN = 6.23 (2.25) BA = 9.05 (2.37)	1.22 (5)
	-80.278	19.951	-4.024	.000	.002	EE = 6.67 (2.92) SE = 8.19 (3.14)	.50 (3)
	-134.887	35.911	-3.756	.000	.005	EE = 6.67 (2.92) BA = 9.05 (2.37)	.84 (4)
2 nd child educational stage - Positive parenting	117.737	36.181	3.254	.001	.032	EE = 9.78 (3.31) BA = 0.1 (2.94)	.15 (1)
	79.528	20.023	3.972	.000	.002	EE = 9.78 (3.31) SE = 7.94 (3.35)	.41 (2)

UN = Unschooled; EE = Early Childhood Education; PE = Primary Education; SE = Secondary Education BA = Baccalaureate.
Effect size (Hedges' g): (1) Small; (2) Small, but not trivial; (3) Medium-moderate; (4) Large; (5) Very large.

Source: Own elaboration.

The same happens in relation to the educational stage in which the third child is attending school, which shows statistically significant differences in the dimensions positive parenting and appropriate discipline, but it is not known between which educational stages these differences occur.

3.2. Predictive model of positive digital parenting

To establish a predictive model based on the significant results, a multiple linear regression using the stepwise method was carried out, taking positive parenting as the dependent variable and the remaining variables of the *c*-APQ and those sociodemographic factors that allowed a scale to be established (parents' age and educational stage of schooling) as independent variables (predictors), as well as those dichotomous variables, which were transformed into dummy variables (parents' and children's sex). The resulting model is shown in Table 6a (Annex). The correlation increases with the inclusion of the three variables in the model, being moderately strong. Likewise, the model explains 38.9% of the variance in the measurement of positive parenting through three variables: educational stage of the first child, i.e., age of the child, appropriate discipline and parental involvement, the latter being the one that contributes the highest percentage to the model.

The p-value associated with F is less than .001, i.e., it is less than the significance level $\alpha = .05$, which leads to rejecting the null hypothesis, i.e., there is a significant linear relationship between the variables analysed. However, this does not mean that this model is the only valid one, since there may be other models that are also valid for predicting the dependent variable (Table 5).

Table 5. ANOVA of the predictive model

Model		Sum of squares	gl	Quadratic mean	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2942.069	1	2942.069	358.240	.000 ^a
	Residue	5773.440	703	8.213		
	Total	8715.509	704			
2	Regression	3174.976	2	1587.488	201.139	.000 ^b
	Residue	5540.533	702	7.892		
	Total	8715.509	704			
3	Regression	3392.106	3	1130.702	148.894	<.001 ^c
	Residue	5323.404	701	7.594		
	Total	8715.509	704			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Parental involvement

b. Predictors: (Constant), Parental involvement, Appropriate discipline

c. Predictors: (Constant), Parental involvement, Appropriate discipline, First child educational stage

Source: Own elaboration.

Table 7a (annex) shows the parameters of the model, the contrast of the slope of the line shows that there is a significance value that leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis, being able to affirm that there is a significant linear relationship. As for the confidence intervals, in all cases it is observed that zero does not belong to the interval, so there is empirical evidence to conclude that the variables of the model influence positive parenting.

To establish the validation of the model we proceeded to check: 1) the normality parameter by applying the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test ($Z = .020$, $p = .692$), which allows us to reject the hypothesis of normality of the residuals; 2) in relation to the homoscedasticity, it should be noted that once the Levene test was performed the assumption of normality is only fulfilled for the independent variable first child educational stage ($p = .213$) but not for the variables parental involvement ($p = .003$) and appropriate discipline ($p = .037$); 3) the independence of the residuals by means of the Durbin-Watson test, which in table 6a (Annex) shows the value 1.961, being close to 2 indicates the uncorrelatedness of the residuals; 4) non-multicollinearity (VIF between 1 and 10).

4. Discussion of the results and conclusions

The aim of this research was to identify the sociodemographics factors involved in the activation of digital and media parental practices regarding the use of social networks sites and consumption of digital content by the children, as well as to explore a predictive model of the weight of these factors in the parenting developed by parents, together with the rest of the variables that form part of the *e*-APQ (involvement, poor supervision, appropriate, inconsistent and strict discipline). In this sense, it was found that there are different factors involved in the exercise of these practices.

Results have demonstrated the fulfillment of the H₁, which alluded to the fact that practices are conditioned by sociodemographic factors, as evidenced by Adigwe (2021). Thus, the sex of the parent conditions the exercise of parenting in all dimensions, except for inconsistent discipline, which evidences that Spanish mothers are the ones in charge of digital and media parenting of minors, in line with previous studies (Gámez-Guadix &

Almendros, 2015; Livingstone et al., 2017; Sasson & Mesch, 2016), while fathers are characterized by exercising poor digital supervision of their children.

The sex of the child also conditions parental practices, especially in the first child, with a higher degree of parental involvement in daughters than in sons, while poor supervision is greater in sons than in daughters. In the case of the third child, a higher degree of appropriate discipline is observed in girls. Therefore, this study is in the same direction as evidenced by Chan et al. (2015) regarding the application of strategies according to sex differences.

The age of the parents also determines the levels of poor supervision and positive parenting. The lowest levels of supervision are found in the 26–34 age group, compared to the 45–54 age group, possibly because the children are younger and would demand more supervision. In addition, between 35 and 44 years of age, paradoxically achieves the highest levels of poor supervision and positive parenting. Maybe, parents of this age group may prefer to apply practices focused on stimulation and affection, praise, encouragement of habits and autonomy (De Stone et al., 2016), rather than others focused on supervision.

The mother's occupation has a fundamental impact on the development of positive parenting and appropriate discipline. Mothers who are public employees (civil servants) show low levels of positive parenting relative to other occupations. Appropriate discipline is exercised to a greater degree by unemployed mothers than by mothers who are self-employed, employees and public employees. This may be due to a greater availability of time to exercise this type of parenting (Sasson & Mesch, 2016).

Levels of poor supervision are higher the older the stage at which the first and second children are in school. This could be due to the existence of another child who demands greater supervision or to the belief that at an older age, children do not need as much supervision; however, as Krämer and Schäwel (2020) have shown, while a child is surfing the Internet, he or she requires parental supervision.

Positive parenting is in the opposite situation; it is higher in the lower school stages, both in the first and in the second child. On the other hand, inconsistent discipline is higher among parents whose first child is in high school than in kindergarten. In the case of the second child, higher levels of parental involvement have been observed in lower school stages. Therefore, the child's educational stage of schooling (age of the child) is another factor that conditions digital parenting practices, as already demonstrated by different authors regarding the application of supervision strategies (Padilla-Walker et al., 2020).

Regarding H2, although an association has been found between these sociodemographic factors and the different dimensions of the *e*-APQ, depending on the case, the predictive model cannot be fully accepted since only the child's stage of schooling is the sociodemographic variable that would form part of it, together with the variables of parental involvement and appropriate discipline. Moreover, this model does not comply with the homoscedasticity principle for the last two variables. However, the fact of identifying that the stage of schooling of the first child, i.e., the age of the child, is an explanatory factor of parental parenting practices is an important finding to analyse why these practices weaken or disappear as children grow up, when in crucial stages such as adolescence, children also need their parents more than ever, since the use of electronic devices and the consumption of digital content are carried out in absolute solitude, which implies a lack of communication between family members.

As for the other two variables that make up the model –appropriate discipline and parental involvement– it is worth mentioning that they correspond to the positive scales of the *e*-APQ, that is, those that measure the direct link between parenting practices and children's behavior (Konok et al., 2020), such as the establishment of rules on the use of electronic devices and consumption of digital content in social networks sites (appropriate discipline) and the creation of a socioemotional environment that enables communication between family members about the actions of minors on the Internet (parental involvement), among other issues, in order to prevent them from becoming digital orphans or ignored by the phubbing that adults exert on their own children (Elboj-Saso et al., 2024), because as Buchner and Wierzbicka (2018) point out, digital parenting modifies parenting practices and family relationship patterns.

In short, Spanish families show levels of parental involvement, positive parenting and appropriate discipline above the mean of the scales, while low levels regarding the negative scales (poor supervision, inconsistent and strict discipline). These data are very encouraging because parents are aware of the relevance of digitisation and act accordingly, in line with Tariq et al. (2022).

In conclusion, this study contributes to show how certain sociodemographic factors (parents' sex, age, mothers' occupation and the stage of schooling of the first and second son and/or daughter) affect the adoption of certain digital parenting practices by Spanish families (positive parenting, parental involvement, supervision and different types of discipline), in relation to the use of social networks, consumption and creation of digital content by their children. It also offers a predictive model, which needs to be further developed with the integration of new factors, but which represents an important contribution to the knowledge of specific parental practices applied to respond to the challenges of the new digital and media ecosystem.

To strengthen the research conducted, it would also be useful to increase the participant sample, motivating fathers to participate in the survey, and check whether the effect size is increased and/or new variables are included in the predictive model. At the same time, this could be complemented by qualitative studies through focus groups or in-depth interviews.

To contrast whether the responses have been influenced by social desirability, it would be necessary in future research to apply the questionnaire to both parents and children in its different versions to contrast the responses and resolve this limitation, as expressed by Cash et al. (2022).

Finally, this scientific evidence can help public institutions or agencies to make decisions involving normative regulation at the national or international level through working groups made up of experts in the field and public policy agents. An example could be the updating of the Committee of Ministers' Recommendation (19/2006) to the new digital and media ecosystem, focusing both on child protection (privacy, security and supervision) (Harris & Jacobs, 2023). On the other hand, the implementation of parental education programs is not a necessity, but an urgency about electronic devices, platforms, applications and software, as well as risks and opportunities of digital media (Page-Jeffery, 2021), i.e., digital competence, without forgetting media competence to develop critical thinking in the face of information disseminated by social media. A task that is also incumbent on the technology industry, the media and regulatory councils, among others.

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Data availability: the data will be made available one year after the last publication in which the data is used and upon justified request by the applicants through the correspondence author's e-mail address.

Annex

Tables <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.27186615>

Research participants: <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.27186660>

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