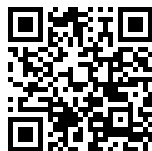


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Exploring Parents' Perceptions about Mobile Phone Usage among Underage Children

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Abstract

Mobile phones have become the need of every person's life to explore the world of new technologies, innovations, and information in order to stay updated. Elders and underage children cannot escape the effects of new technology, especially mobile phones. This is because they get mobile phones in their early ages of life without any surveillance or screen timings. This could be harmful for their habitual behavior, community interactions, as well as their mental and physical health. Parents are uniquely positioned to influence and positively shape their children's habitual behaviors and personality development. In this regard, they can play a pivotal role by guiding their children on the constructive use of mobile phones and by establishing appropriate screen time limits. To explore the phenomenon of concern, the current study employed quantitative research design. Data was collected from 62 parents having children between the age group of 3-18 years residing in Rawalpindi. Moreover, data was collected via self-designed questionnaire including questions related to demographics, mobile phone use, and parents' perceptions using Likert scale method. Findings showed that a large proportion of parents, that is, 37.5% seemed neutral regarding mobile phone usage. They argued that mobile phones play an important role in their children's life and is the best source to learn and enhance new skills and educational content. In terms of harassment, 46.9% of parents expressed concern that their children might experience cyberbullying or virtual harassment due to mobile phone usage. Similarly, 46.9% of parents believed that the excessive use of mobile phones negatively impacted their children's social relationships. A majority of parents were also worried about the adverse effects of mobile phone use on their children's mental and physical health, noting that it often contributed to increased stress and anxiety. Overall, parents acknowledged that mobile phones play both positive and negative roles in their children's lives. While many were satisfied with their children using mobile phones for educational

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purposes and skill development, they simultaneously expressed concern regarding online safety and the potential for their children to encounter cyberbullying through its excessive use.

Keywords: mobile phone usage, parents' perceptions, psychological issues, underage children

Introduction

The 21st century is widely recognized as an era of rapid innovation and technological advancement. With each passing day, the world continues to evolve through the emergence of new developments in modern technology. Technology has changed this world and everyone's daily life completely over the past years (AgingInPlace, [2023](#)). Smart devices include mobile phones and tablets which have changed this world. In the United States, teenagers predominantly use social media applications, such as Snapchat, YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok on their mobile phones (Faverio & Sidoti, [2024](#); Khan et al., [2018](#)). The number of smartphones sold globally increased from approximately 1.2 billion in 2014 to 1.59 billion in 2021 (Jay, [2025](#)). As of 2024, the global number of mobile phone users has reached an estimated 4.88 billion (Ayub et al., [2024](#); Gill, [2025](#); Obilor, [2022](#), Obilor, [2023](#); Safdar, [2023](#); Tallat et al., [2024](#)).

The majority of mobile phone users belongs to teenage groups who adopt these gadgets or smart devices in their early ages (Silver, [2019](#)). Not only adults, underage children also gratify their need by scrolling social media platforms on their mobile phones. Indeed, mobile phones have become need of the hour to compete with new world. The rapid pace of innovation in mobile phone technology has rendered these devices both highly useful and potentially harmful. In Pakistan, the widespread use of mobile phones has affected individuals across a broad age range, from 3 to 55 years. Children, in particular, are increasingly addicted to mobile devices, often spending excessive time playing games. Adults and older individuals, particularly those aged 45 to 55, tend to uncritically believe and disseminate information encountered on social media without verifying its authenticity. This widespread circulation of misinformation and disinformation has contributed to growing public anxiety and depression, representing a serious and alarming concern in contemporary society.

Problem Statement

Although, mobile phones have become an essential part of everyday life, the integration of internet connectivity has further enhanced their convenience and utility in the modern world. However, this technological advancement also poses significant risks to the younger generation, particularly children. The continuous introduction of new applications and features makes mobile phones increasingly complex and potentially hazardous for underage users, who often lack the maturity to discern their benefits and drawbacks. Therefore, it is imperative to explore parents' perceptions of mobile phone usage among children to assess whether these devices truly contribute to educational development, skill acquisition, health, and social interaction. As children are becoming heavy consumers of mobile phones, it is crucial to address and potentially reduce this usage to mitigate its negative impacts.

Significance

It is widely recognized that the use of mobile phones among children is increasing steadily, which may have both positive and negative consequences. Therefore, it is essential to understand the extent to which mobile phone usage is beneficial for children, as well as how it may adversely impact their health and daily routine. This study aimed to provide valuable insights for parents by highlighting the advantages and disadvantages of mobile phone use among underage children.

Study Gap

Previous research has primarily focused on the socioeconomic factors related to mobile phone usage. However, several critical aspects have remained underexplored. Therefore, the current study investigated parents' concerns and beliefs regarding various dimensions of mobile phone use among underage children including internet security, academic learning, virtual harassment, behavioral and habitual changes, as well as physical and mental health impacts. Additionally, the study sought to highlight the importance of parental supervision in ensuring responsible and balanced mobile phone use among children.

Objectives

The current study explored the parents' perceptions regarding the damaging and positive effects of mobile phones on their children.

- To find parents' privacy and security concerns regarding personal data of their children.
- To explore parents' concerns regarding the physical health of their children due to the excessive use of mobile phones.
- To investigate parents' concerns regarding the mental health of their children due to the excessive use of mobile phones.
- To identify how mobile phones are affecting their children's interaction with the family and community.
- To determine parent's perceptions whether mobile phones help their children in educational progress or are just a wastage of time.
- To explore parent's concerns regarding the increasing threats of virtual or online harassment.
- To investigate from parents that whether the use of mobile phones is enhancing and developing any skills among their children.
- The eighth objective focused to have knowledge from parents that whether they observe any behavioral or habitual changes in their children due to the excessive use of mobile phones.
- To discover whether mobile phones should be given to children following specific timings or any time with surveillance.
- To know whether parents have any kind of concerns that mobile phones could change cultural values in their children.

Theoretical Framework

This study is informed by Media Dependency Theory, which asserts that the level of reliance on media is proportional to the effects it places on people's beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. The results revealed that mobile phones are making parents believe they are compromising their children's mental health, physical well-being, social skills, cultural values, standards of education, and daily habits. However, these conclusions show a relatively high-dependency level of mobile media when put to use for information access, entertainment, socialization, or learning. Children come to depend on mobile phones for more cognitive and emotional needs, making them susceptible to possible negative or positive influences from such a heavy reliance on digital content. Hence, Media Dependency Theory gives

excellent reasoning as to how mobile phones have, in different ways, gotten incorporated into their development. Thus, it shapes their perceptions, behaviors, and reactions, as they become the primary modality of socialization and experience in their everyday life.

Theoretical underpinnings of this study refer to Social Learning Theory propounded by Albert Bandura which underscores the importance of observation and imitation of others to learn behaviors, attitudes, and emotional responses. Thus, this research demonstrated that parents increasingly perceived the negative effects of mobile phone use on their children's mental health, behavior, physical well-being, cultural values, and social relationships. These findings align with the principles of Social Learning Theory. This theory suggests that children learn behaviors by observing and imitating models encountered in their environments, whether through digital or traditional means. Social media platforms and online gaming sites serve as influential environments where both positive and negative behaviors can be observed and internalized. As children engage with mobile media, they form perceptions of appropriate behaviors, emotional responses, and social norms. This, in turn, influences their habits, emotional well-being, academic performance, and social development. Consequently, this study underscored the significant role played by digital media as a socializing agent. This reinforces the relevance of Social Learning Theory to understand the behavioral and psychological outcomes of mobile phone use among children in the contemporary digital age.

Literature Review

Pereira and Sequera ([2021](#)) studied how parents perceive their children's use of mobile phones as well as their awareness and risks associated with it. The aim of this study was to examine the extent of parental influence on their children's mobile phone usage. The study employed a quantitative approach and collected data from parents of children aged between 12 and 20 years. Findings showed that 67.6% of the parents were concerned about the excessive use of mobile phones by their children. However, 55% of the parents seemed concerned that their children do use cell phones with hands free and 58.8% of the parents were anxious as their children became inactive and showed zero interest in their studies. Approximately, 61.8% of the parents did not have enough knowledge about the disadvantages of excessive use of mobile phones, however, 38.2% parents had enough knowledge about disadvantages of mobile phones. The study concluded that

parents should have knowledge about the after effects of excessive use of mobile phones and they should keep an eye on their children.

Buabbas et al. (2021) conducted research on parents' attitudes towards school students' overuse of smartphones and its detrimental health impacts. The aim of this study was to raise awareness among parents about the potential disadvantages of excessive smartphone use among their children. The attitudes of parents towards mobile phone usage may play a crucial role to mitigate the harmful effects of this technology. This research adopted a qualitative methodology and data was collected from parents of children aged between 6 to 18 years. The findings revealed that majority of the parents were aware of the risks associated with the overuse of mobile phones including the potential for addiction and the severe side effects it could have on their children's health. However, many parents reported difficulties in controlling their children's excessive mobile phone usage. Health issues, such as headaches, aggression, and problems associated with vision were commonly observed among children. The study concluded that fostering strong family relationships could be an effective strategy to help children overcome mobile phone addiction.

Lukavská and Gabrhelík (2021) explored parental perceptions and attitudes towards children's smartphone usage. The study focused on the parents' awareness of the negative consequences of excessive mobile phone use, particularly its impact on intellectual development and behavioral changes. While the study also highlighted the potential benefits, such as the opportunity for children to learn new skills and access progressive education, it primarily examined the differences in parental attention to the risks associated with smartphones. Specifically, the study explored parents' tendencies to impose limitations on mobile phone usage, particularly in relation to education and entertainment, which are crucial areas for children's development. The findings emphasized that a child's progress is closely linked to the guidance and boundaries set by parents regarding mobile phone use.

Pope-Ford (2020) examined parental awareness regarding the impact of mobile phone use on children's cognitive, social, and emotional development. The study highlighted that a significant portion of parents expressed concerns about the harmful consequences of excessive screen time. It also identified a gap between parents' perceptions and their actual implementation of screen time restrictions for their children. Furthermore,

the study emphasized that enhanced education and awareness among parents regarding the developmental risks associated with mobile phone use are crucial in mitigating these concerns.

Chong ([2023](#)) explored parental perspectives on screen time and smartphone usage, particularly among young children. The majority of parents were aware of the potential long-term dangers associated with the excessive screen time. While many parents viewed mobile phones as valuable tools for learning and education. They found it challenging to manage the amount of screen exposure their children experience. This study highlighted the divergent viewpoints among parents regarding screen time, suggesting that these varying perspectives may influence the level of control parents exert over their children's mobile phone usage. It also revealed the tension between recognizing the educational benefits of mobile phones and the growing concerns about their potential negative effects.

Tirotchi et al. ([2024](#)) focused on parental control over mobile phone usage among children in developing countries. The study identified that smartphones present both academic opportunities and potential risks, which may lead towards conflicting views among parents regarding their children's use of these devices. The research further revealed that the socioeconomic factors significantly influence parents' ability to impose limits on smartphone usage. This highlights the role of economic and social contexts in shaping parental control over children's screen time.

Iqbal et al. ([2022](#)) examined parental control over mobile phone usage and its impact on children's behavior and academic performance. The study determined that restrictive strategies regarding smartphone use align with positive outcomes, as excessive smartphone use is associated with issues, such as depression. While parents are aware of the risks of overuse, the perceived benefits of smartphone technology for educational purposes and entertainment complicate efforts to regulate their children's screen time effectively.

Johnson ([2014](#)) explored the parent's perceptions of digital media use in childhood. Parents seemed worried that mobile phone is affecting their children's health and they have failed in imposing screen time. This study explained that there are inadequate directions by parents to children.

Husnain et al. ([2023](#)) focused on how mobile phone use in early childhood effects the social and cognitive development of children. This

study explored that parents are well aware about the pros and cons of mobile phone use. However, most of the parents seem confused whether mobile phones are important for education and learning or not.

Yuniarni et al. ([2024](#)) focused on the children's use of social media and smartphones in their childhood. The study showed that parents are becoming more anxious about the disadvantages, such as revelation to unbecoming content on digital media apps. However, parents scuffle set restrictions on their children due to increasing trend of learning skills and education from the Internet.

Stuckelman et al. ([2022](#)) conducted research on parent's perceptions about mobile phones in the digital era. The study explored that according to some parent's mobile phones are an intrusion for children, meanwhile they find mobile phones as the best way to learn new skills. This study summed up that there should be guidelines for parents to keep check and balance on children.

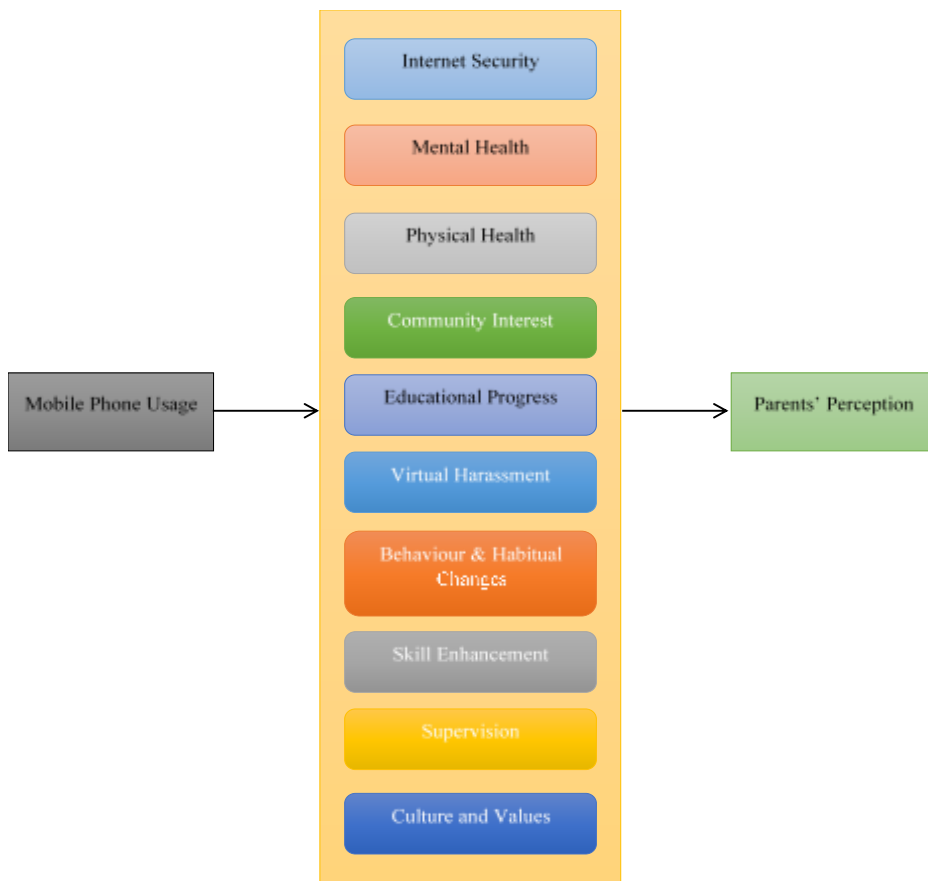
Aladé and Donohue ([2023](#)) conducted research on comparing the attitude of parents about mobile phones among children on cultural values and social trends. The study showed that the perception of using mobile phones among children varies place to place. This is because educated parents allow their children to use mobile phones. They think that this is the need of the hour, however, in other areas and situations parents seem reluctant and allow their children to have phones when they think it is needed.

Fisher et al. ([2022](#)) determined the role of parents in managing mobile phone usage among young children. The research has been conducted in the United States. The study highlighted that parents are of the opinion that overuse of mobile phone is harmful for their children. However, they feel that mobile phones help children in education, so they have mixed concerns regarding mobile phone usage and children.

Buabbas et al. ([2021](#)) studied parents' behaviors about smartphone usage among their children. The study focused on how mobile phones are beneficial to communicate and learn in leisure time. The study concluded that parents are aware of the benefits and risks of using mobile phones. Furthermore, parents do allow their children to use mobile phones for the purpose of studies but some parents think that the excessive use of mobile phones may affect the physical and mental health of their children.

Selak et al. (2025) explored the interaction of parents and children on mobile phone usage. The research explored that the majority of parents seemed concerned that mobile phones impact the progress of children but parents struggle to reduce the screen time limit of their children. The study suggested that there should be a set mechanism to limit the excessive use of mobile phones.

Figure 1
Study Model



Methodology

The current study used quantitative research method to explore the perception of parents about mobile phone usage among underage children. The Likert scale questionnaire was used to collect data from parents living

within Rawalpindi city through online surveys. The target audience of this study comprised parents having children aged between 3-18 years living in Rawalpindi. The sample size of this study was (n=62) parents having children between aged 3-18 years. Overall, 65 questionnaires were distributed among the selected sample and 62 filled questionnaires were received. Therefore, the response rate was 95.38% which was exceptional. The non-probability (purposive sampling) technique was used to collect the data. The data collected was then analyzed using SPSS software to get reliable and valid results.

Results

Table 1
Demographics

Sr.	Questions	Options	<i>f</i>	%
1	What is your gender?	Male	15	23.4
		Female	47	73.4
2	What is your age?	25-34	30	46.9
		35-44	12	18.8
		45-54	20	31.3
3	How many children do you have?	1	15	23.4
		2	15	23.4
		3	16	25.0
		4	9	14.1
		5	7	10.9
		More than 5	0	0
4	How many children do you have under the age of 18?	1	31	48.4
		2	16	25.0
		3	14	21.9
		4	1	1.6
		5	0	0
		More than 5	0	0
5	What is the age of your child/children?	3-10	27	42.2
		11-18	31	48.4

The demographic characteristics of the respondents are summarized as follows. A majority of participants were females (73.4%), while 23.4% were identified as males. Regarding age distribution, the largest proportion of respondents (46.9%) fell within the 25–34 years age bracket, followed

by 31.3% aged between 45–54 years, and 18.8% between 35–44 years. In terms of family size, 25.0% reported having three children, while an equal proportion of 23.4% each indicated having either one or two children. A smaller percentage had four (14.1%) or five children (10.9%) and none reported having more than five children. Concerning children under the age of 18, nearly half of the respondents (48.4%) had one child, 25.0% had two, and 21.9% had three; very few had four (1.6%), and none reported having more than four. With respect to the age of their children, 48.4% had children between 11–18 years, while 42.2% had children aged 3–10 years.

Table 2*Mobile Phone Usage among Underage Children*

Sr.	Questions	Options	<i>f</i>	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1	I believe mobile phones are an important tool for my child's social development.	Strongly Agree	3	4.7	2.97	1.01
		Agree	18	28.1		
		Neutral	24	37.5		
		Disagree	12	18.8		
2	I think mobile phone usage helps my child to stay connected with friends and family.	Strongly Disagree	5	7.8	2.66	0.94
		Strongly Agree	3	4.7		
		Agree	29	45.3		
		Neutral	19	29.7		
3	I feel that mobile phones are a useful resource for my child to learn new skills.	Disagree	8	12.5	2.56	0.97
		Strongly Disagree	3	4.7		
		Strongly Agree	8	12.5		
		Agree	22	34.4		
4	I believe that mobile phones improve my child's access to educational content.	Neutral	23	35.9	2.52	1.04
		Disagree	7	10.9		
		Strongly Disagree	2	3.1		
		Strongly Agree	9	14.1		
5	I think mobile phone use makes my child more independent.	Agree	26	40.6	2.52	1.00
		Neutral	15	23.4		
		Disagree	10	15.6		
		Strongly Disagree	2	3.1		
		Strongly Agree	11	17.2	2.52	1.00
		Agree	20	31.3		
		Neutral	19	29.7		
		Disagree	12	18.8		
		Strongly Disagree	62	96.9		

Sr.	Questions	Options	<i>f</i>	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
6	I am concerned that my child may spend too much time on their mobile phones.	Strongly Agree	8	12.5	2.51	1.03
		Agree	28	43.8		
		Neutral	13	20.3		
		Disagree	10	15.6		
		Strongly Disagree	2	3.1		
7	I believe mobile phones expose my child to potential online dangers (e.g. cyber bullying, inappropriate content etc).	Strongly Agree	10	15.6	2.47	1.02
		Agree	25	39.1		
		Neutral	17	26.6		
		Disagree	8	12.5		
		Strongly Disagree	2	3.1		
8	I think mobile phone usage negatively impacts my child's face-to-face communication skills.	Strongly Agree	8	12.5	2.61	1.16
		Agree	27	42.2		
		Neutral	15	23.4		
		Disagree	5	7.8		
		Strongly Disagree	7	10.9		
9	I feel that mobile phone usage is an important part of my child's daily routine.	Strongly Agree	7	10.9	2.61	1.12
		Agree	29	45.3		
		Neutral	12	18.8		
		Disagree	9	14.1		
		Strongly Disagree	5	7.8		
10	I believe that mobile phones are a major source of distraction for my children during their study time.	Strongly Agree	22	34.4	2.05	0.99
		Agree	19	29.7		
		Neutral	16	25.0		
		Disagree	3	4.7		
		Strongly Disagree	1	1.6		

The perceptions of respondents regarding the impact of mobile phone usage on their children's development are presented here. A moderate level of agreement was observed regarding the belief that mobile phones are important tools for social development ($M = 2.97$, $SD = 1.008$), with 28.1% agreeing and 37.5% remaining neutral. Similarly, 45.3% agreed that mobile phones help children stay connected with friends and family ($M = 2.66$, $SD = 0.940$). When asked whether mobile phones serve as useful resources for learning new skills, responses were mixed, with 34.4% agreeing and 35.9% remaining neutral ($M = 2.56$, $SD = 0.969$).

Participants also perceived mobile phones as enhancing access to educational content ($M = 2.52$, $SD = 1.036$), with 40.6% agreeing. Regarding independence, 31.3% agreed that mobile phone use fosters greater autonomy among children ($M = 2.52$, $SD = 1.004$). However, concerns were also evident: 43.8% expressed worry about excessive mobile phone usage ($M = 2.51$, $SD = 1.027$), and 39.1% agreed that mobile phones expose children to online dangers, such as cyberbullying ($M = 2.47$, $SD = 1.020$).

Additionally, 42.2% believed that mobile phone usage negatively affects face-to-face communication skills ($M = 2.61$, $SD = 1.164$), while 45.3% acknowledged that mobile phones are integral to their children's daily routines ($M = 2.61$, $SD = 1.121$). Finally, strong concern was evident regarding mobile phones as distractions during study time, with 34.4% strongly agreeing and a mean score of 2.05 ($SD = 0.990$).

Table 3
Parents' Perceptions

Sr.	Questions	Options	<i>f</i>	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Internet Security						
1-	I am concerned about my child's online privacy and security.	Strongly Agree	11	17.2	2.78	0.740
		Agree	37	57.8		
		Neutral	11	17.2		
		Disagree	3	4.7		
		Strongly Disagree	0	0		
2-	I believe that internet security is a significant risk for children using mobile phones.	Strongly Agree	9	14.1	2.21	0.839
		Agree	37	57.8		
		Neutral	8	12.5		
		Disagree	7	10.9		
		Strongly Disagree	0	0		
3-	I think my child is at risk of online fraud or hacking.	Strongly Agree	11	17.2	2.23	0.864
		Agree	31	48.4		
		Neutral	13	20.3		
		Disagree	6	9.4		
		Strongly Disagree	0	0		
4-	I feel that there should be stricter security measures for children using the Internet.	Strongly Agree	19	29.7	2.02	0.885
		Agree	26	40.6		
		Neutral	12	18.8		
		Disagree	4	6.3		
		Strongly Disagree	0	0		

Sr.	Questions	Options	<i>f</i>	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Mental Health						
1-	I believe that excessive mobile phone use negatively affects my child's mental health.	Strongly Agree	22	34.4	1.89	0.770
		Agree	25	39.1		
		Neutral	15	23.4		
		Disagree	0	0		
		Strongly Disagree	0	0		
2-	I am concerned that mobile phones contribute to my child's stress or anxiety.	Strongly Agree	17	26.6	1.95	0.734
		Agree	32	50.0		
		Neutral	12	18.8		
		Disagree	1	1.6		
		Strongly Disagree	0	0		
3-	I think that using social media on mobile phones impacts my child's self-esteem.	Strongly Agree	11	17.2	2.37	0.979
		Agree	26	40.6		
		Neutral	18	28.1		
		Disagree	5	7.8		
		Strongly Disagree	2	3.1		
4-	I feel that screen time impacts my child's emotional well-being	Strongly Agree	19	29.7	2.03	0.868
		Agree	25	39.1		
		Neutral	15	23.4		
		Disagree	3	4.7		
		Strongly Disagree	0	0		
Physical Health						
1-	I believe that excessive mobile phone usage is harmful to my child's physical health.	Strongly Agree	19	29.7	2.03	0.930
		Agree	27	42.2		
		Neutral	9	14.1		
		Disagree	6	9.4		
		Strongly Disagree	0	0		
2-	I am concerned that mobile phone use contributes to my child's poor posture.	Strongly Agree	17	26.6	2.07	0.946
		Agree	30	46.9		
		Neutral	8	12.5		
		Disagree	5	7.8		
		Strongly Disagree	1	1.6		
3-	I worry that my child spends too much time on mobile devices, leading to a lack of physical activity.	Strongly Agree	15	23.4	2.03	0.836
		Agree	33	51.6		
		Neutral	10	15.6		
		Disagree	2	3.1		
		Strongly Disagree	1	1.6		

Sr.	Questions	Options	<i>f</i>	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
4-	I think prolonged screen time affects my child’s sleep quality.	Strongly Agree	16	25.0	2.03	0.802
		Agree	28	43.8		
		Neutral	14	21.9		
		Disagree	2	3.1		
		Strongly Disagree	0	0		
Community Interest						
1-	I feel that mobile phone use reduces my child’s face-to-face interactions with others.	Strongly Agree	11	17.2	2.27	0.861
		Agree	27	42.2		
		Neutral	17	26.6		
		Disagree	5	7.8		
		Strongly Disagree	0	0		
2-	I believe that excessive mobile phone use negatively affects my child’s social relationships.	Strongly Agree	11	17.2	2.22	0.937
		Agree	30	46.9		
		Neutral	12	18.8		
		Disagree	3	4.7		
		Strongly Disagree	2	3.1		
3-	I think mobile phones reduce the amount of time my child spends with family and friends in person.	Strongly Agree	14	21.9	2.19	0.919
		Agree	25	39.1		
		Neutral	16	25.0		
		Disagree	3	4.7		
		Strongly Disagree	1	1.6		
4-	I am concerned that mobile phones have a negative impact on my child’s communication skills.	Strongly Agree	11	17.2	2.38	1.010
		Agree	25	39.1		
		Neutral	16	25.0		
		Disagree	6	9.4		
		Strongly Disagree	2	3.1		
Educational Progress						
1-	I believe that mobile phones help my child in their academic learning.	Strongly Agree	7	10.9	2.43	0.884
		Agree	28	43.8		
		Neutral	21	32.8		
		Disagree	3	4.7		
		Strongly Disagree	2	3.1		
2-	I feel that mobile phone use has a positive impact on my child’s education.	Strongly Agree	7	10.9	2.53	0.982
		Agree	26	40.6		
		Neutral	17	26.6		
		Disagree	8	12.5		
		Strongly Disagree	2	3.1		

Sr.	Questions	Options	<i>f</i>	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
3-	I am concerned that mobile phone use distracts my child from studying.	Strongly Agree	8	12.5	2.43	0.981
		Agree	28	43.8		
		Neutral	17	26.6		
		Disagree	4	6.3		
		Strongly Disagree	3	4.7		
4-	I think mobile phones provide useful educational resources for my child.	Strongly Agree	6	9.4	2.47	0.853
		Agree	26	40.6		
		Neutral	24	37.5		
		Disagree	2	3.1		
		Strongly Disagree	2	3.1		
Virtual Harassment						
1-	I am concerned that my child could experience cyberbullying through mobile phone usage.	Strongly Agree	12	18.8	2.15	0.799
		Agree	30	46.9		
		Neutral	15	23.4		
		Disagree	3	4.7		
		Strongly Disagree	0	0		
2-	I believe that mobile phones make it easier for my child to be harassed online.	Strongly Agree	14	21.9	2.12	0.832
		Agree	27	42.2		
		Neutral	15	23.4		
		Disagree	3	4.7		
		Strongly Disagree	0	0		
3-	I feel that my child may be exposed to inappropriate content on their mobile phones.	Strongly Agree	15	23.4	2.22	0.993
		Agree	24	37.5		
		Neutral	16	25.0		
		Disagree	3	4.7		
		Strongly Disagree	2	3.1		
4-	I think that virtual harassment is a serious risk for children using mobile phones.	Strongly Agree	13	20.3	2.20	0.917
		Agree	28	43.8		
		Neutral	14	21.9		
		Disagree	4	6.3		
		Strongly Disagree	1	1.6		
Behavior and Habitual Changes						
1-	I have noticed a change in my child's behavior due to excessive mobile phone usage.	Strongly Agree	6	9.4	2.47	0.892
		Agree	28	43.8		
		Neutral	20	31.3		
		Disagree	4	6.3		
		Strongly Disagree	2	3.1		

Sr.	Questions	Options	<i>f</i>	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
2-	I believe that mobile phone use is affecting my child’s daily habits.	Strongly Agree	11	17.2	2.18	0.792
		Agree	30	46.9		
		Neutral	16	25.0		
		Disagree	3	4.7		
		Strongly Disagree	0	0		
3-	I feel that my child spends too much time on mobile phones, which affects their routine.	Strongly Agree	16	25.0	2.08	0.869
		Agree	27	42.2		
		Neutral	13	20.3		
		Disagree	4	6.3		
		Strongly Disagree	0	0		
4-	I think mobile phone usage has led to a shift in my child’s attitudes or behavior.	Strongly agree	12	18.8	2.19	0.888
		Agree	29	45.3		
		Neutral	11	17.2		
		Disagree	6	9.4		
		Strongly Disagree	0	0		
Skill Enhancement						
1-	I believe that mobile phones help my child improve their skills and knowledge.	Strongly Agree	7	10.9	2.48	0.868
		Agree	25	39.1		
		Neutral	23	35.9		
		Disagree	5	7.8		
		Strongly Disagree	1	1.6		
2-	I think my child gains useful skills through mobile phone apps and content.	Strongly Agree	7	10.9	2.43	0.909
		Agree	28	43.8		
		Neutral	19	29.7		
		Disagree	4	6.3		
		Strongly Disagree	2	3.1		
3-	I feel that mobile phones are a valuable tool for my child’s skill development.	Strongly Agree	5	7.8	2.64	0.857
		Agree	22	34.4		
		Neutral	24	37.5		
		Disagree	10	15.6		
		Strongly Disagree	0	0		
4-	I believe mobile phones play a positive role in my child’s educational progress and skill building.	Strongly Agree	5	7.8	2.67	0.889
		Agree	21	32.8		
		Neutral	25	39.1		
		Disagree	9	14.1		
		Strongly Disagree	1	1.6		

Sr.	Questions	Options	<i>f</i>	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Supervision						
1-	I find it difficult to monitor my child’s mobile phone usage.	Strongly Agree	5	7.8	2.67	0.914
		Agree	21	32.8		
		Neutral	25	39.1		
		Disagree	7	10.9		
		Strongly Disagree	2	3.1		
2-	I believe that mobile phones make it challenging to supervise my child’s activities.	Strongly agree	7	10.9	2.53	0.999
		Agree	27	42.2		
		Neutral	15	23.4		
		Disagree	9	14.1		
		Strongly Disagree	2	3.1		
3-	I struggle to set limits on my child’s screen time.	Strongly Agree	10	15.6	2.48	1.033
		Agree	23	35.9		
		Neutral	17	26.6		
		Disagree	8	12.5		
		Strongly Disagree	2	3.1		
4-	I feel that mobile phones complicate my ability to regulate my child’s online behavior.	Strongly Agree	5	7.8	2.60	0.924
		Agree	26	40.6		
		Neutral	18	28.1		
		Disagree	10	15.6		
		Strongly Disagree	1	1.6		
Culture and Values						
1-	I am concerned that mobile phone usage is influencing my child’s values and beliefs.	Strongly Agree	5	7.8	2.70	1.013
		Agree	24	37.5		
		Neutral	18	28.1		
		Disagree	10	15.6		
		Strongly Disagree	3	4.7		
2-	I believe that mobile phones may expose my child to content that conflicts with our cultural values.	Strongly Agree	2	3.1	2.77	0.963
		Agree	27	42.2		
		Neutral	17	26.6		
		Disagree	11	17.2		
		Strongly Disagree	3	4.7		
3-	I feel that mobile phone use is changing the way my child views certain cultural norms.	Strongly Agree	3	4.7	2.86	1.090
		Agree	24	37.5		
		Neutral	16	25.0		
		Disagree	10	15.6		
		Strongly Disagree	6	9.4		

Sr.	Questions	Options	<i>f</i>	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
4-	I worry that mobile phones might lead my child to adopt values that are different from those in our family or culture.	Strongly Agree	5	7.8	2.82	1.157
		Agree	24	37.5		
		Neutral	15	23.4		
		Disagree	9	14.1		
		Strongly Disagree	7	10.9		

The survey explored parental perceptions regarding the impact of mobile phone usage on children across several dimensions. These include internet security, mental and physical health, community interest, educational progress, virtual harassment, behavioral changes, skill enhancement, supervision, and cultural values. Internet security concerns were evident, with the majority of parents expressing apprehension about their child's online privacy and risks, such as fraud and hacking. The respondents agreed on the necessity of stricter security measures for children using the Internet ($M = 2.02$, $SD = 0.885$). In terms of mental health, a significant portion of parents believed that excessive mobile phone use negatively affected their children's psychological well-being. This included impacts on stress, anxiety, self-esteem, and emotional health. Mean scores indicated a strong agreement ($M = 1.89$ – 2.37 , SD range = 0.734 – 0.979). Regarding physical health, parents expressed concerns about the harmful effects of mobile devices, particularly relating to posture, physical activity, and sleep quality. Most responses clustered around agreement ($M = 2.03$ – 2.07 , SD range = 0.802 – 0.946). Community interest findings indicated that mobile phone use was perceived to reduce face-to-face interactions and communication skills among children ($M = 2.19$ – 2.38 , $SD = 0.861$ – 1.010). Similarly, in the educational progress domain, while many parents acknowledged the educational benefits of mobile phones, concerns about distraction were also prevalent ($M = 2.43$ – 2.67 , $SD = 0.853$ – 0.982). The risk of virtual harassment emerged as a significant issue, with parents worried about cyberbullying and exposure to inappropriate content ($M = 2.12$ – 2.22 , $SD = 0.799$ – 0.993). Regarding behavior and habitual changes, many parents observed behavioral shifts and disruptions in their children's daily routines linked to mobile phone use ($M = 2.08$ – 2.47 , $SD = 0.792$ – 0.892). In the area of skill enhancement, opinions were more balanced; while a considerable number of parents agreed that mobile phones facilitate skill development, a notable proportion remained neutral ($M =$

2.43–2.67, $SD = 0.857$ – 0.909). Supervision challenges were highlighted, with parents reporting difficulties in monitoring and regulating their children's mobile phone activities ($M = 2.48$ – 2.67 , $SD = 0.914$ – 1.033). Finally, in the culture and values category, parents expressed concern that mobile phone usage might influence their children's cultural orientation and value systems, with mean scores suggesting moderate agreement ($M = 2.70$ – 2.86 , $SD = 0.963$ – 1.157).

Discussion

The current study dealt with the pros and cons of mobile phone usage among underage children. Pereira and Sequera (2021) stated in their research article that parents were anxious as their children showed zero interest in studies due to excessive use of mobile phones. However, the current study proved that the integration of internet with mobile phones has made this world a global village. Every single information is available on the devices, which helps children in their academic learning and learning new skills. Meanwhile, the misuse of mobile phones distracts children from their studies. Buabbas et al. (2021) stated in their research that parents find it difficult to control their children from using mobile phones. The current study also proved that children have lack of physical activities due to the excessive use of mobile phones. This causes laziness, poor posture, and sleeping disorder in children. Chong (2023) stated that the majority of parents think that children use mobile phones for educational purposes. This might make it difficult to set screen time. Yuniarni et al. (2024) stated that parents seemed concerned about their children's exposure to unbecoming content on digital media apps on mobile phones. Furthermore, the current study proved that the upgradation in technology, such as mobile phones and internet is simultaneously dangerous for everyone, especially children. So, the ratio of harassment, cyberbullying, and exposure to inappropriate content virtually is increasing which is alarming for everyone's security.

Insights from the findings of this study were based on the perspectives under Media Dependency Theory and Social Learning Theory. Media Dependency Theory holds that the more individuals depend on the media for information, social understanding, and entertainment, the more their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors become substrates for media influence. Since the survey content brings out issues, such as internet security, virtual harassment, supervision challenges, and behavioral risks, these highlight an increasing dependence of children on mobile phones. As mobile phones

have become an important component of communication, education, and entertainment, children are increasingly exposed to cyberbullying, misinformation, and changing societal cultures. This dependency further strengthens the media's role as the prime agent in shaping children's worldview, behavior, and value systems often to the detriment of traditional agents of influence, such as family and community.

At the same time, the Social Learning Theory states that individuals learn behaviors and social norms through observing others, primarily from media models. The findings related to changes in behavior, emotional well-being, cultural values, and social relationships indicate that children, through being exposed to varied content on mobile phones, adopt the attitudes, behaviors, and lifestyles that are shown online. This is in support of Bandura's theory of observation and imitation as central mechanisms in learning. Exposure, whether positive or negative, to role models via social media undergoes a measure of influence upon a child's self-esteem, emotional stability, and moral development. Hence, the theories in tandem show how mobile phone usage is not a switch in technology but a socialization process that radically intervenes in the arenas of children's learning, behaviors, and values.

Conclusion

The study concluded that mobile phones have become an integral part of children's lives which could have both positive and negative impacts on them. Mobile phones not only help children in education and learning new skills, however, these devices may have harmful effects on the mental and physical health of children which could stay throughout their life. Therefore, parents need to keep check on their children while their kids use mobile phones.

Conflict of Interest

The authors of the manuscript have no financial or non-financial conflict of interest regarding the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

Data Availability Statement

Data supporting the findings of the study will be made available by the corresponding author upon request.

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