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## Comprehensive review on Parenting and Technology: Opportunities and Challenges in the 21st Century

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### Abstract

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, parenting has become increasingly complex. With a vast array of technology and resources available to parents, it is important for them to understand how best to use these tools to raise healthy and successful children. The advent of technology and the internet has changed the way we live and interact with each other, and it has also influenced the way we raise our children. In this article, it will be compared and discussed the differences between parenting in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and in previous centuries. The article will provide an overview of how technology and other cultural factors have impacted the way we raise our children, and how this has affected the children's development. In addition, there are many new challenges that face parents today such as cyberbullying, social media addiction and mental health issues which require special attention from parents. This article will discuss some key strategies for effective parenting in the 21<sup>st</sup> century including setting boundaries, staying connected with your child's activities online and offline, being aware of potential dangers online and monitoring their behavior while also providing support when needed. It will also explore ways that modern technologies can be used effectively by both parents and children alike to foster positive relationships between family members. Finally, this article will provide advice on how best to cope with common parenting problems associated with raising kids in the digital age so families can enjoy all of its benefits without sacrificing safety or security.

**Key words:** Parenting, 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Technology, Cultural Factors, Cyberbullying

## Introduction

Parenting has undergone significant changes due to the influences of society, technology, and values. It has evolved significantly in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as compared to past centuries. Advantages of this century parenting include greater access to information, resources, and support networks. Additionally, modern parenting styles are more responsive to the needs of children and families, with a focus on positive parenting and healthy social relationships.

However, technology addiction, increased screen time, and social media pressure are all potential challenges that parents must navigate. Technology is changing the way children communicate and socialize, which can impact parenting (Nichols & Selim 2022; Lafton et al. 2023). Maintaining a balance between work and family life can be difficult, and parents must navigate the changing landscape of the digital world.

It is necessary to explore the changes in parenting practices that have occurred in recent times due to the evolution of technology, social norms, and lifestyles. Due to changes in family dynamics, social conventions, and technological and technological breakthroughs over the past few decades, parenting has experienced enormous transformation (Canario et al. 2022).

The aim of the article is to provide an overview of the differences in parenting between the 21<sup>st</sup> century and past centuries and how these changes have impacted parenting styles and strategies for raising children successfully. It identifies the societal, technological, and cultural changes that have influenced parenting in the modern era.

The following parts will be discussed the changes in parenting styles and the challenges and opportunities that parents face in the modern world. They emphasize the importance of understanding the changes and adjusting parenting styles accordingly to ensure the well-being of children and families. It is necessary to highlight the key changes in parenting practices, including the role of technology, the shift towards shared parenting, changes in disciplinary techniques, the importance of education, and changes in parent-child communication.

## Methodology

Comparative methodology is a research approach that involves comparing and contrasting different phenomena or practices in different contexts or periods (Smelser, 1976; Collier, 1991). In the context of studying parenting practices, comparative methodology can be used to compare and contrast the practices of parenting in the 21<sup>st</sup> century with those of past centuries.

To conduct a comparative analysis, researchers first need to identify the key aspects of parenting that they want to compare. These could include parenting roles, parenting styles, disciplinary practices, educational practices, communication patterns, and cultural values related to parenting. Once the key aspects are identified,

researchers can then collect data from different sources, including historical documents, literature, and ethnographic studies, to examine how these aspects have changed over time.

So, the use of comparative methodology can provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the changes in parenting practices over time and help identify areas where further research is needed to understand the complexity of parenting practices in different contexts.

### **Comparison with the Past Centuries**

Parenting practices have evolved over the years as society changes. The 21<sup>st</sup> century has seen a shift in parenting styles compared to past centuries. Parents today are more likely to be focused on nurturing their children and providing them with emotional support, rather than using strict discipline techniques as was common in the past (Kiff et al. 2011). Additionally, parents now have access to an abundance of resources that can help guide their decisions when it comes to raising kids, such as books about child development or online courses for new parents (Plantin & Daneback, 2009). Furthermore, technology has allowed us to stay connected with our children even if we're not physically present—something that wasn't possible before. There is also greater emphasis placed on teaching our children life skills such as problem-solving and critical thinking so they can become successful adults later on in life. As a result, there are several differences in parenting between the 21<sup>st</sup> century and past centuries. The differences will be explained using technology, social norms and lifestyles.

The developed technology has made more differences in the life of individuals and societies. It has played a significant role in shaping parenting practices in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Unlike the past centuries, modern parents have access to a wide range of digital devices, including smartphones, tablets, and computers, which they use to communicate, entertain, and educate their children (Plantin & Daneback, 2009). This has led to a shift in how parents monitor their children's activities, as well as how they discipline them.

It is the role of parents in the development of their children. In the past, parenting was mainly the responsibility of mothers, while fathers played a secondary role (Hodkinson & Brooks, 2020). However, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there has been a shift towards shared parenting, where both parents take an active role in raising their children (Turchi & Bernabo, 2020).

The discipline in the family that parents use to raise their children has an impact on their relationships. In the past, parents used to employ strict disciplinary measures such as corporal punishment to discipline their children (Kiff et al. 2011). However, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there has been a move towards positive parenting techniques, which focus on building strong relationships with children and using positive reinforcement to encourage good behavior (Meier et al. 2016).

Education as a tool provides benefits and more opportunities for families to achieve desired and expected behaviors. It has become a top priority for parents in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with many investing heavily in their children's education (Proctor et al.2020). Unlike in the past, where education was mainly focused on basic reading and writing skills (Klein&Boscolo,2016), modern parents are more interested in holistic education that includes social, emotional, and cognitive development (Mavrellos & Daradoumis, 2020). The development shows itself during the communication in the family and in the society. Communication between parents and children has also changed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. With the advent of social media and messaging apps, parents can now communicate with their children more easily and frequently (DeHoff et al. 2016). This has led to a more open and transparent relationship between parents and their children.

Parenting in the twenty-first century is very different from parenting in earlier centuries due to the differences in technology, parental role, discipline, education, and communication. Technological advancements, changes in social norms, and evolving lifestyles have all contributed to the shift in parenting practices. As it moves forward, it is essential to embrace these changes and adapt our parenting practices to meet the needs of children.

### **The changes which influenced parenting styles**

As society, technology, and values continue to evolve, so too do the ways in which parents approach the task of raising children. In recent years, it can be seen a number of key developments that have contributed to changes in parenting styles and strategies. These developments include shifts in societal attitudes towards gender and family structure, as well as advances in technology and a growing emphasis on certain values.

One of the most significant changes in recent years has been an increased acceptance of gender equality and non-traditional family structures. With more and more people embracing the idea that there are many ways to form a family, parents are no longer limited to traditional models of mother-father-child (Diamond, 2017). It has led to more diverse family arrangements and a greater recognition of the importance of inclusivity and acceptance. This shift towards non-traditional family structures has led to more shared parenting, where both parents take an active role in raising their children and fathers spend an average of 3 hours per workday on childcare activities (Beckmeyer et al. 2020: Turchi & Bernabo, 2020).

Parenting practices have been significantly impacted by technological advancements as well as shifts in society attitudes. Today, parents have access to a wealth of information on parenting techniques, philosophies, and resources, thanks to the widespread availability of online resources and support groups (Curtis et al. 2018). Mobile apps designed to help track a child's growth and activities have also become increasingly popular, providing parents with a convenient way to stay on top of their

child's progress. This trend towards increased screen time has created new challenges for parents, such as monitoring their children's online activity, setting limits on screen time and providing entertainment and educational resources (Sigman, 2012; Horowitz-Kraus & Hutton, 2018).

Also, there has been a growing emphasis on certain values in modern parenting. Many parents today place a greater emphasis on fostering independence in their children from an early age, rather than prioritizing strict obedience or conformity (Barnett et al. 2022). Positive reinforcement is also becoming more popular as a motivator for behavior change, with parents recognizing that fear-based strategies can have negative effects on a child's self-esteem and emotional development. This reflects a shift towards parenting styles that prioritize emotional connection, empathy, and positive reinforcement over strict discipline and obedience that based on the belief that children learn best in a supportive and nurturing environment (Meier et al. 2016; Goldberg et al. 2021).

Furthermore, the importance of emphasizing on education has been increased year by year. Education has become a top priority for many parents in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with parents investing heavily in their children's education (Kent et al. 2022). This has led to a shift towards more involved parenting, with parents taking an active role in their children's academic and extracurricular activities.

All these factors have contributed to significant changes in parenting styles over the past several decades. As we continue to learn more about child development and the best ways to support our children, it's likely that we will continue to see shifts in how parents approach the task of raising kids. Ultimately, the goal of all parents is the same: to provide a safe, nurturing, and supportive environment that helps our children grow and thrive.

### **Advantages of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Parenting**

Parenting has evolved significantly in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and there are now more resources and support networks available than ever before. One of the most significant benefits of modern parenting is access to information. The internet gives more opportunities to parents to find answers to almost any question related to parenting, from nutrition advice to sleep training methods (Gomes et al. 2021). There are countless online sources available that provide valuable insight into caring and tools that make life as a parent more manageable.

Apps designed specifically for parents can help keep track of everything from feeding schedules to doctor appointments, and smart thermometers make it easy to stay informed about a child's health (Haleem et al. 2022). These products eliminate the need for bulky planners and paperwork, making it easier for busy parents to keep track of important information.

The importance of support networks cannot be overlooked when it comes to raising children in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Social media sites like Facebook have made it possible for parents all over the world to connect with each other. Through sharing stories and experiences, many new mothers and fathers feel less alone during the often-overwhelming journey of parenthood (Dickstein, 2015).

There are several benefits to 21<sup>st</sup> century parenting that were not available to parents in previous generations. Firstly, there is access to a wealth of information about child development, parenting strategies, and child-rearing challenges (Gomes et al. 2021; Haleem et al. 2022). This information is available in various forms, including websites, blogs, podcasts, and social media groups.

Secondly, the 21st century has brought about an explosion in resources available to parents, including books, videos, apps, and online courses (Curtis et al. 2018; Haleem et al. 2022). These resources can help parents develop their parenting skills, learn about new approaches to parenting, and find support for specific challenges they may be facing.

Thirdly, the internet has made it easier for parents to connect with others who are going through similar experiences (DeHoff et al. 2016; Curtis et al. 2018; Haleem et al. 2022). Social media groups, online forums, and parent blogs provide a platform for parents to ask questions, share advice, and receive support. These networks can be especially valuable for parents who live in isolated areas, have limited social support, or have unique parenting challenges.

Finally, 21st century parenting also offers more flexibility than previous generations. Thanks to advancements in technology, parents can work remotely, allowing them to be more involved in their children's lives (Meier et al. 2016). Additionally, many employers offer family-friendly policies, such as flexible work schedules and parental leave, that can make it easier for parents to balance work and family responsibilities.

### **The positive effects of technology on parenting**

In today's world, technology has become an integral part of our lives. It has brought about significant changes in the way we communicate, work, and even raise our children. The advancements in technology have had several positive effects on parenting, making it easier for parents to stay connected with their children, access information, and work from home while still being present for their families.

One of the most significant benefits of technology on parenting is increased connectivity. The video chat apps like Zoom, Skype, and FaceTime, parents can stay connected with their children even when they are away from home (DeHoff et al. 2016). This allows parents to monitor their children's activities, keep in touch with them, and maintain a strong emotional connection, regardless of the distance between them.

Another significant benefit of technology on parenting is the ability to work from home (Karanikas & Cauchi, 2020). With flexible work hours, parents can be present for their family while still earning an income. This can give parents more time to attend school events, doctor's appointments, and extracurricular activities while reducing the stress and expense of commuting.

Access to information is also another positive effect of technology on parenting. The internet provides quick and easy access to a vast amount of information on parenting topics, such as nutrition, child development, and behavior management techniques (Meier et al. 2016; Goldberg et al. 2021). This helps parents make informed decisions about their children's health and well-being.

Furthermore, there are now many parenting apps available that can help parents manage their daily routines, track their child's development, and connect with other parents. These apps make it easier for parents to stay organized and feel more confident in their parenting abilities.

### **The modern parenting styles**

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, modern parenting has shifted towards a more responsive approach to meeting the needs of children and families. This approach emphasizes providing a nurturing environment that supports the emotional, social, physical, and intellectual development of each individual child. Compared to traditional parenting styles, modern parents are more involved in their children's lives, provide emotional support, and proactively teach important life skills (Diamond, 2017).

One of the key aspects of modern parenting is the child-centered approach. This means that parents focus on building a close emotional bond with their children, communicating with them openly, and involving them in decision-making (Meier et al. 2016). This approach helps parents to better understand and respond to the needs and feelings of their children.

Another important aspect of modern parenting is positive discipline. Rather than relying on traditional punitive forms of discipline, modern parents use a more positive approach that focuses on rewarding good behavior, setting clear expectations, and helping children understand the consequences of their actions (Goldberg et al. 2021). This helps children to develop important life skills like problem solving, conflict resolution, and communication strategies.

Modern parents also recognize the importance of work-life balance and the need for flexibility. They are more likely to have family-friendly work arrangements such as flexible schedules, telecommuting, or parental leave (Haleem et al. 2022). This allows parents to be more present in their children's lives and to be responsive to their changing needs.

The well-being of the child and the family is highly valued in modern parenting settings. This includes promoting healthy eating habits, regular exercise, and good

sleep habits. It also includes prioritizing mental health and emotional well-being, and providing support and resources for parents who may be struggling with mental health issues (Dickstein, 2015).

### **Challenges of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Parenting**

Parenting has become complex and challenging due to the proliferation of digital technology. Children are progressively becoming addicted to technology as cellphones, tablets, computers, and other devices are used on a large scale (Yadav & Chakraborty, 2022). This addiction can lead to social isolation, decreased academic performance, difficulty sleeping, health problems such as headaches and eye strain, and emotional issues such as depression and anxiety.

Moreover, children are spending more time using digital media than ever before, which can affect their physical health, academic performance, and social skills. Children who spend excessive amounts of time in front of screens have been shown to be more likely to become obese, have poor sleep quality, and experience delays in language and social development (Chassiakos et al. 2016: Domingues-Montanari, 2017).

In addition to these concerns, social media can put pressure on children and teens to conform to social norms, leading to anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem. Parents need to be aware of the impact of social media on their children and help them develop healthy habits around social media use.

Modern parents also face the challenge of having busy schedules, which can make it difficult to spend quality time with their children. As a result, they may experience feelings of guilt and stress. Furthermore, the internet and social media can pose safety concerns for children, including cyberbullying, exposure to inappropriate content, and online predators. Parents need to be vigilant and monitor their children's online activities to ensure their safety.

### **A balance between work and family life**

As parents in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, finding a balance between work and family life can be a difficult task. With the demands of work and the responsibilities of parenting, finding enough time and energy to manage both can be difficult (Nomaguchi & Milkie, 2020). This can lead to feelings of guilt, stress, and even conflict between work and family.

One of the primary difficulties that parents face is time constraints. Many jobs require long hours, making it difficult for parents to find quality time to spend with their families (Karanikas & Cauchi, 2020). This can lead to tension between spouses and strained relationships with children. Parents may struggle with feelings of guilt for not being able to provide their children with enough time and attention.

The conflict between work and family is another significant challenge that parents face (Nomaguchi & Milkie, 2020). Often, parents may need to make tough choices about which events to attend, such as work functions or school events. This can cause stress and create tension, making it difficult for parents to feel they are doing a good job in both areas of their life.

Another challenge for parents is financial pressure. Many families rely on dual incomes to make ends meet, which can lead to parents working long hours or taking on additional jobs (Monheit, 2022). This leaves them with less time to spend with their families, leading to stress and burnout.

Lack of flexibility is another obstacle that parents face in balancing work and family life (Meier et al. 2016). Some jobs may not offer the flexibility that parents need to attend school events or take time off for doctor's appointments. This can make it challenging for parents to meet their family responsibilities while also meeting their work obligations.

The juggling of multiple tasks, such as providing for the family, taking care of the home, being available for school activities, and fitting in personal needs, is a constant challenge for parents (Dickstein, 2015; Nomaguchi & Milkie, 2020). Finding time to manage all these responsibilities can be a real struggle, leading to burnout and physical and problems.

It is a hard task for balancing work and family life is a significant challenge for many parents. The difficulties faced include time constraints, work-life conflict, financial pressures, lack of flexibility, and burnout. To overcome these challenges, parents can prioritize their families, set boundaries around work, seek flexible work arrangements, and prioritize quality time with family. It's important for parents to create a healthy work-life balance that works for them and their families.

### **The way children communicate, socialize and the parenting**

As technology continues to advance, it is changing the way that children communicate and socialize. This has both positive and negative impacts on parenting, and it is important for parents to understand how technology affects their children's communication and socialization. One of them is online communication. Children are using online platforms like social media, messaging applications, and video chat more frequently to interact with their peers (Horowitz-Kraus & Hutton, 2018). While this can make it easier for them to stay in touch with friends and family who live far away, it can also lead to a lack of face-to-face communication skills.

The other one is social media. It is changing the way that children socialize. It can create a sense of community and help children feel more connected to their peers (Sigman, 2012), but it can also lead to social isolation and feelings of inadequacy when children compare themselves to others.

Furthermore, online gaming has effects on their socialization. Online gaming is a popular way for children to socialize with their peers. While it can be a fun way to connect with others, it can also lead to addiction and excessive screen time. During online activities and gaming safety is an important point to pay attention. The internet can pose safety concerns for children, including cyberbullying, exposure to inappropriate content, and online predators (Jain et al. 2021). Parents need to be vigilant and monitor their children's online activities to ensure their safety.

When it comes to raising their children with all of these developed technologies and their equipment, parental involvement is essential. With the rise of technology, parents need to be more involved in their children's online activities to ensure that they are using technology in a safe and responsible way (Diamond, 2017; Meier et al. 2016). This can be a time-consuming and challenging task for many parents.

As technology continues to play an increasingly significant role in children's lives, it is important for parents to be aware of the ways in which it is affecting their children's communication and socialization. This includes monitoring their online activities, setting boundaries around technology use, and encouraging face-to-face communication and socialization. Parents can help their children use technology in a safe and responsible manner while also ensuring that they develop strong communication and social skills both online and offline with proper guidance and support.

### **Setting healthy boundaries and guidelines for technology usage in the family**

Technology is already an integral part of daily life, and it's become essential to establish healthy boundaries and guidelines for its use, especially within families. Setting clear guidelines and expectations for technology usage can help create an environment where all members of the family feel respected, safe, and secure when using devices. Moreover, boundaries can help parents understand what types of activities are suitable for each family member at different ages, promoting responsible use of digital media.

Establishing healthy boundaries for technology usage can help promote healthy habits, reduce screen time, encourage face-to-face communication, teach responsible technology use, and reduce technology addiction (Yadav & Chakraborty, 2022; (Nichols & Selim 2022). Screen time has been found to have a negative impact on mental health, especially in children and teenagers (Keles et al. 2020; Orben, 2020). Limiting screen time can help mitigate these negative effects and promote healthy habits. In addition, face-to-face communication remains essential, and setting boundaries around technology use can encourage more in-person communication and socialization.

By setting healthy boundaries and guidelines for technology use, parents can teach their children how to use technology responsibly and in a way that supports healthy social relationships and mental health. Moreover, setting clear rules around online

safety will protect children from cyberbullying and other negative experiences while exploring tech-related content online.

## Conclusion

Parenting in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has become a more complex and challenging task due to the various changes that have taken place in society, technology, and values. It is helpful to have greater knowledge about parenting in the twenty-first century, since it exposes both its advantages and challenges.

The advantages of 21<sup>st</sup> century parenting are numerous. Parents now have access to a wealth of information, resources, and support networks that can help them make informed decisions. There are more opportunities for connecting with other parents and sharing experiences, which can be particularly helpful for new parents. Modern parenting styles are also more responsive to the needs of children and families, greater flexibility in terms of lifestyle choices, promoting a healthier and happier family environment.

However, there are also several challenges associated with 21<sup>st</sup> century parenting that must be addressed. Technology addiction, increased screen time, a lack of face-to-face interaction with children, and social media pressure are all potential challenges that parents must navigate. The constantly evolving technology landscape can be difficult to keep up with and navigate safely, and parental anxiety can be heightened due to concerns about keeping their children safe online. Maintaining a balance between work and family life can also be challenging, as technology continues to change the way children communicate and socialize. It is crucial for parents to understand the changes in society, technology, and values that have influenced parenting styles in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and to adjust accordingly to ensure the well-being of children and families.

One way for parents to address these challenges is to set healthy boundaries and guidelines for technology usage in the family. This can promote healthy habits, limit screen time, encourage face-to-face communication, teach responsible technology use, and reduce technology addiction. By doing so, parents can ensure that technology use supports, rather than detracts from, healthy social relationships and mental health.

In conclusion, parenting in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has both advantages and challenges. By leveraging the benefits of modern parenting while navigating these challenges, parents can create a supportive and healthy environment for their families. It is important for parents to be proactive in setting healthy boundaries and guidelines for technology usage in the family, to ensure that technology is used in a responsible and positive way.

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