

Investigating the Information Experiences of Young Adults Utilizing Social Media for Parenting Insights

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Abstract. The advancement of digital technology has driven early adults to be more active in seeking information, including about parenting. Social media emerges as a primary source due to its fast, varied, and need-based accessibility. Along with increasing awareness of the importance of preparation before becoming a parent, the demand for parenting information also rises. The individual's emotional and psychological readiness closely influences this information search, in addition to the desire to learn. One of the most significant factors is the unresolved inner child condition, which triggers the urge to seek healthy parenting patterns and avoid repeating past parenting styles. This study aims to explore how early adults interact with and interpret parenting information from social media. Using a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach, data were collected through semi-structured interviews involving 12 informants aged 21–40 years with diverse marital backgrounds. The findings reveal six main themes: (1) initial dynamics in consuming parenting information; (2) social media as a source and engagement space; (3) strategies for evaluating information quality and validity; (4) psychological impacts of information; (5) transformation in parenting perspectives and practices; and (6) influence on relational orientation and family planning. The findings of this research indicate that the interaction of early adults with parenting information not only expands cognitive knowledge but also influences their perspectives and attitudes towards parenting, encourages self-reflection processes, and shapes their views on building relationships and planning family life.

Keywords: Information Experience, Early Adults, Social Media, Parenting Information, Inner Child

1 Introduction

The development of digital technology has changed the way individuals access and meet their information needs. Social media has become one of the most widely used platforms due to its ability to present information quickly, broadly, and according to needs. For young adults in the transition phase towards marriage and parenthood, social media is often used to seek information about parenting as a form of preparation for their new roles.

Information seeking about parenting by young adults is not only practical but also reflective. They not only want to know the technical aspects of parenting, but they are also trying to understand and prepare themselves emotionally, including recognizing unresolved childhood parenting wounds or inner child issues. The inner child is a part of oneself formed from childhood experiences, which can have a significant impact on behaviour and interpersonal relationships in adulthood, including in marriage and parenting(1).

In this context, the concept of information experience becomes important to study. Information experience encompasses how individuals absorb, interpret, and relate information to their lives(2). Unfortunately, most previous studies have focused more on young mothers' preferences for using social media for parenting, without exploring their personal experiences and how they interpret the information. Therefore, this study aims to explore how young adults experience, process, and interpret parenting information on social media as part of their preparation for parenthood.

2 Methods

This research uses a qualitative method because the data obtained and analyzed relates to the views, perceptions, opinions, and experiences of young adults in using social media as a source of parenting information, which gives rise to meaning, and this meaning influences their behaviour or decisions. This study uses a phenomenological approach that focuses on the phenomenon being researched based on human life experiences. The study aims to examine, gain in-depth understanding, and comprehend events within a group of people in a specific situation so that it has its own meaning. With this approach, the researcher attempts to understand individual experiences from their own perspectives. Therefore, the phenomenological approach was chosen because it aligns with the research objectives, which are to seek meaning and explore the experiences of young adults when interacting with parenting information obtained through social media.

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with informants selected by purposive sampling, namely young adults aged 21–40 who use social media to seek parenting information. In the process of recruiting informants, the researcher will comment on parenting content that appears on social media feeds. In these comments, the researcher will include the established criteria for informants. If any users respond to the comment, the researcher will contact them via direct message to ask for their willingness to be an informant in this study.

The data was analyzed using thematic analysis. The process begins with a complete and accurate transcription of the interview recording, followed by verification through re-reading the transcript while listening to the recording to ensure no important information is missed. Next, a coding process was carried out to identify the parts of the data relevant to the research focus. Similar codes are grouped into categories and then developed into tentative themes. After that, the researchers compiled a final report containing in-depth analysis and relationships between themes, presented clearly and structured.

3 Result and Discussion

In this study, information experience is understood as the involvement of young adult individuals in various information activities. These activities include the process of searching for, reading, obtaining, and consuming parenting information, as well as discussing, sharing experiences, and applying them in daily parenting practices. Through these activities, information is not only cognitively understood but also shapes individuals' perspectives on parenting. Furthermore, this involvement tangibly encourages them to adopt certain values or principles in their daily lives, as a

form of transforming information into concrete action. Information experience as the way a person interacts with information comprehensively and meaningfully in daily life. This experience not only involves cognitive aspects but also touches upon emotional dimensions, social relationships, physical activity, and even spiritual values, all of which are closely related to a person's life context(3). Involvement in both the production and consumption of information can increase its subjective value. When someone feels emotionally connected to information, their motivation to apply that information in real life also increases(4).

Furthermore, the involvement of young adults in using social media goes beyond passive consumption, demonstrating active participation in discussions and collaboration. This activity contributes to shaping meaningful experiences in childcare. This indicates that social media not only serves as a relevant source of information for their needs but also as a collaborative space where individuals exchange experiences, build mutual understanding, and support the formation of parental identity. The role of social media as an interactive platform capable of changing the way humans relate to information and knowledge(5).

On the other hand, this study also found that young adults do not necessarily accept all parenting information they encounter without question. The strategy for assessing the quality and validity of information is multidimensional, involving several considerations. Dominantly, individuals tend to assess the information they consume as something positive and relevant. This is influenced by how the information is presented, its easy-to-understand delivery, its impactfulness, and the inclusion of real-life examples of parenting practices, which are the main attractions. Then it was strengthened by considering the credibility of the information source. Young adults tend to choose to interact with parenting information delivered by professional accounts that are considered more credible and accountable, and have a clear basis of validity. This choice indicates an individual's strategic step in seeking assurance about the information received, which is sometimes followed by information verification actions to ensure data validity and relevance before application. The quality and validity of information play an important role in determining the impact of the information received. These two aspects are often closely related to source credibility, which is the extent to which a source is considered to have expertise or honesty(6). When young adults trust information sources, their perception of risk will decrease and they will be able to benefit more from the information.

Nevertheless, not all parenting information from social media is considered relevant or suitable for application. Young adults realize that subjective information, which is potentially misleading and less relevant to their individual family contexts, can have a negative impact if applied without consideration. Therefore, the evaluation process is carried out by comparing various sources, considering the benefits and risks, and filtering information to align with the realities of their lives. Misapplication can occur if information is not tailored to the specific family situation, making it crucial to filter information reflectively and contextually(7).

The involvement of young adults with parenting information on social media not only broadens their horizons but also elicits diverse psychological responses. The findings of this study indicate that their experience interacting with information frequently evokes both pleasant and unpleasant emotional reactions. Feeling

motivated, relieved, or understood arises when they find information that aligns with their personal needs and situations. However, it's also common to feel anxious, envious, or depressed, especially when comparing yourself to the experiences of other parents. This finding reinforces the concept of the information experience dilemma which is the psychological condition that arises when individuals must reconcile new information with their existing knowledge and values. In this context, the process of adapting to parenting information on social media does indeed require personal adjustments that don't always go smoothly(7).

Despite being accompanied by complex emotional dynamics, the experience didn't stop at simply receiving and understanding information. The findings of this study also indicate that young adults actively strive to implement the information they have acquired into their daily lives. In this regard, social media not only serves as a source of information but also as a collaborative space and a platform for social support that strengthens the process of internalizing parenting values. The parenting information they encountered was not merely understood cognitively, but truly permeated their consciousness and helped shape their attitudes towards raising children. This knowledge is used as an initial reference in various parenting practices, such as respecting children's consent, adjusting speech to small children, implementing more structured eating rules according to feeding principles, and encouraging fathers' involvement in creating emotional closeness with their children. Parenting information from social media can influence parents' perceptions, decisions, and behaviors, and have a direct impact on child development(8).

Interestingly, the final findings of this study revealed that the interaction between young adults and parenting information on social media also shapes their perspectives on relational orientation and family life planning. However, these findings are not entirely consistent with some previous studies, which placed more emphasis on the fact that relational orientation and family life planning are more influenced by internal and structural factors. Early childhood parenting experiences, perceptions of parental roles, age at the time of having children, and factors such as education level, income, and patriarchal culture are elements that simultaneously shape a person's perspective and readiness in choosing a partner, parental role involvement, and planning family life(9)(10)(11)(12).

From the entire range of information activities, it is evident that the involvement of young adults is not merely a mechanical process, but is driven by strong personal motivation. The findings of this study indicate that the motivation of young adult individuals to use social media as a source of parenting information is driven by two main factors: proactive motivation and reflective motivation. Proactive motivation is the drive to equip oneself with parenting knowledge as a form of preparation for becoming a parent. Digital sources play an important role in facilitating the transition to parenthood and supporting the process of forming a parental identity(13). Reflective motivation, on the other hand, stems from personal experiences, particularly less-than-ideal childhood parenting experiences, which create a desire for change and a determination not to repeat the same patterns with children in the future. The availability of parenting education content on social media can be utilized to raise parental awareness in an effort to break the cycle of intergenerational trauma(14). This motivation then drives the active involvement of

young adults in the process of searching for, consuming, and practicing parenting information they find on social media

4 Conclusion

The intense interaction between young adults and parenting information on social media has psychological impacts, both positive emotional responses such as increased self-confidence and motivation, and negative responses such as pressure from the parenting standards seen on social media. The information consumed is not only understood cognitively, but also fosters the emergence of new perspectives on parenting. Over time, this perspective evolved into a process of internalization, where new values regarding parenting began to take root and influence their attitudes and behaviors in everyday parenting practices. In fact, this interaction also shapes individuals' perspectives on relational orientation and family life planning. Thus, the information experiences of early adult individuals in using social media as a source of parenting information shape their understanding, promote more directed parenting practices, and strengthen their meaning-making and readiness to face the role of parents.

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