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Chapter I
Introduction
Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to determine how social media affects the behavior of

elementary aged children and how to apply the specific social-emotional learning (SEL)

competencies students need to develop in order to have a successful online experience. In

regards to social media, a successful online experience looks like students following good role

models who post and share positive messages. Another indicator of a successful online

experience is having the self awareness to post content and messages that encourage others rather

than hurt others. Digital citizenship skills for children are crucial, however they do not infuse the

SEL competencies from the offline lives of children into their online lives. By using the SEL

competencies of self awareness, self management, responsible decision making, relationship

skills, and social awareness, students can develop these SEL competencies into their digital lives.

SEL competencies are developed in children by educators, parents, and influential adults

consistently modeling respect and positive behaviors that enable children to develop into caring

adults (CASEL, 2018).

Research Questions

1. What is the parent perception of the relationship between social-emotional competencies
   and their influence on elementary-aged children to be good digital citizens?

2. What is the parent perception of the ways that elementary aged children use
   social-emotional competencies on social media?

3. What is the parent perception of the factors that can make social media challenging and
   or beneficial for elementary aged children to navigate?

Statement of the Problem

Steiner-Adair (2015) who is the seminal researcher for linking SEL competencies and social media claims that there is a need for elementary aged children to use social-emotional learning (SEL) competencies on social media. As educators and administrators in elementary schools, the perception of the problem is that students lack the SEL competencies necessary to have a successful online experience. Students today are more active than ever on social media platforms (Twenge, 2017). Social media is a powerful tool and a great influencer on people. Research also shows that people have two identities, one on social media and the other in school (Steiner-Adair, 2015).

Educators observe that schools and parents are racing to catch up with how quickly technology has infiltrated children's lives. "Schools can serve as facilitators of productive parent-child interactions and support parents in navigating the complex and often overwhelming parameters of the digital era" (Patrikakou, 2016, page 20). By merging the two worlds together, parents have the opportunity to reinforce the SEL competencies that are taught in school.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), a seminal organization for SEL reports that SEL programs have a positive impact in schools, both behaviorally and academically (CASEL, 2018). What has not been observed is the transfer of SEL competencies into students' digital lives. Schools can utilize SEL competencies to help students become aware of the impact of their behavior on others. We as the researchers are elementary educators and administrators with experience in teaching SEL to elementary-aged children. Elementary educators and administrators believe in the power of linking SEL competencies and digital citizenship. By doing this, students will have a successful online

experience where students have the self awareness to post content that encourages others. Digital citizenship is a key component to a successful online experience. Students need to be aware of the content that they are posting online and understand how their actions online can affect others (Twenge, 2017).

Definition of Terms:

- *Cyberbullying* - *"*Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place over digital devices like cell phones, computers, and tablets. Cyberbullying can occur through text and apps, or online in social media, forums, or gaming where people can view, participate in, or share content. Cyberbullying includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation. Some cyberbullying crosses the line into unlawful or criminal behavior" (What is cyberbullying?, n.d.).

- *Digital Citizenship* - Students need to understand human, cultural, and societal issues related to technology while practicing legal and ethical behavior. Digital citizenship is critical because it teaches students the norms of appropriate behavior using technology and sets the stage for how students will work with others in a global, digital society. Digital citizenship teaches students to use technology appropriately and enjoy its capabilities to become more productive. Students are preparing for a world full of technology and therefore digital citizenship must be more than just a teaching tool. Educators need to teach empathy, which prepares students to think about the feelings of people before they post on the internet (Ribble, 2017).

- *Elementary aged children* - For this study, elementary aged children is defined as children in kindergarten through 5th grade.

- *Emotional Intelligence* - "The capacity to be aware of, control, and express one's emotions, and to handle interpersonal relationships judiciously and empathetically" (Goleman, 2018).

- *Social-emotional learning (SEL)* - The process whereby children and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage their emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (Bradberry, & Greaves, 2009).

- *Social Media* - computer-mediated technologies that facilitate the creation and sharing of information, ideas, career interests and other forms of expression via virtual communities and networks. Social media can be classified into six different types of categories: (1) collaborative projects (e.g., Wikipedia); (2) blogs or microblogs; (3) content communities (e.g.,YouTube); (4) social networking (LinkedIn, Facebook); (5) virtual game-worlds; and (6) virtual social-worlds (e.g., Second Life)" (Kaplan, A., & Haenlein, M., 2010).

Background

Students are not practicing social-emotional skills in their digital lives (Steiner-Adair, 2015). There is no transfer of SEL knowledge from the school to the parents to help their children navigate their digital lives at home (Steiner-Adair, 2015). According to educators, with technology ever present and social media gaining popularity, students need to use self-awareness

to act appropriately accordingly in school, at home, and online. Acting appropriately online means students sending, posting, or sharing positive content about a situation or another person.

Social media has a broad reach into the lives of many young people and has the potential to influence their decisions. Social media can provide an overabundance of negative messages (Moreno, 2014). Behind the privacy of a keyboard, kids today can be cruel. Online is where most of the bullying takes place. Unfortunately, this is when someone lacks the empathy and social-emotional skills necessary for acceptable online behaviors (Steiner-Adair, 2015). Unempathetic behaviors on social media are becoming more and more common today (Borba, 2016). According to Twenge (2017), children having access to smartphones and social media at a young age, is leading to extremely unhealthy habits, in fact she claims that children are on the verge of a mental health crisis (Twenge, 2017).

According to Hollandsworth (2011), lack of digital citizenship awareness can lead to problematic student conduct within schools and poor decisions online. Parents, teachers, administrators, and students need to understand and practice digital citizenship (Hollandsworth et al., 2011). Since technology is not disappearing, students need to learn how to use social media appropriately. We as the researchers believe that parents and teachers need to help students develop self-awareness and social-awareness through the use of SEL in order for it to carry over into the student's digital behavior.

Significance of the Study

With the ever-growing presence of social media and Internet usage, we as the researchers believe there is a need to teach students how to act appropriately on the internet by applying the SEL competencies to deal with challenges that may arise on the internet. Challenges on the

internet include how to handle situations such as cyber-bullying, violence, posting of inappropriate graphic images and content, illegal activities, showing disrespect, confidential information, and location check-ins. Steiner-Adair (2015) researched this issue and reported receiving calls from both teachers and administrators asking for help regarding student online behavior.

Steiner-Adair (2015) noticed that students are developing two identities: online self and offline self. Students are misbehaving online by using language that they would not say in school because it is considered cool to be mean online (Steiner-Adair, 2015). Steiner-Adair (2015) suggests, "it's essential to balance increased technology use with stronger programs in social-emotional learning" (p. 38). The SEL competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making will enable students to be strong digital citizens.

Study Rationale

The study rationale is to research the parent perception between social-emotional competencies and their influence on elementary aged children to be good digital citizens. Today's elementary aged children have never known a world without smart devices and social media. The researchers will collect data on how social media influences elementary aged children's behavior. The researchers, in their roles as educators and administrators, have observed how important SEL competencies are in developing children's self-awareness, empathy and compassion for others. The need for linking SEL competencies with children's online social media lives has never been more important than it is right now. By studying this relationship, the

researchers can identify common practices and strategies for helping children navigate their digital lives by applying SEL competencies for a successful online experience.

Theoretical Framework

The main learning theory that applies to this study is the connectivism theory. The theorists who proposed the connectivism theory are Downes (2010) and Siemens (2005). Connectivism theory seeks to explain how the internet has rapidly changed learning in the current digital world. New information is constantly being acquired; having the ability to draw distinctions between meaningful and not meaningful information is vital. Connectivism acknowledges the new ways people can share information and learn amongst themselves and across the world (Siemens, 2005).

Conceptual Framework

Bradberry and Greaves (2009), seminal researchers for Emotional Intelligence define the five social-emotional and academic competencies, which include self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. Self-awareness is recognizing one's own emotions and understanding one's values and strengths. Self-management refers to how well one manages emotions, impulses, stress, and whether one can establish and achieve goals and exercise self-discipline. Social awareness is the ability to empathize with others and to appreciate and respect diversity. Relationship skills refer to the ability to have healthy relationships and resolve conflicts. Responsible decision making allows people to make good choices and take responsibility for one's decisions (Albright, Weissberg, & Dusenbury, 2011). We as the researchers believe that teaching these skills to children will help create a positive online and offline community for them.

This social-emotional learning (SEL) competency chart below will guide the researchers theoretical framework as the researchers conduct their study.
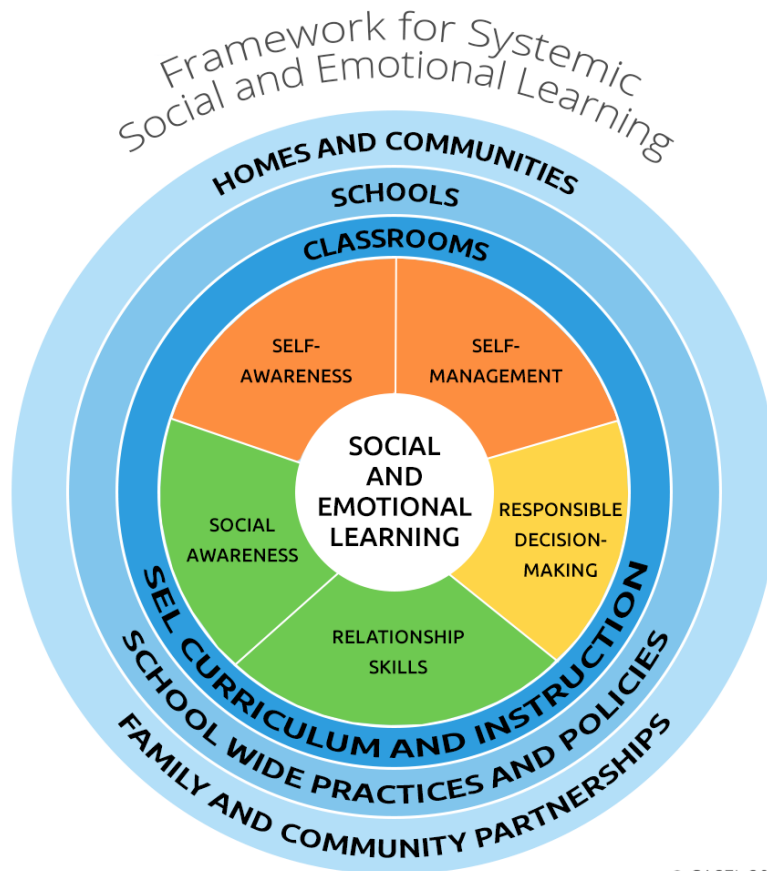
Figure 1
(Casel, 2017)

Context of the Study

In this mixed method case study, the researchers will study the effect of social media on elementary aged children. The researchers will also study how to best supply information to parents and teachers regarding digital citizenship. Research shows that elementary aged children have access to social media and need strategies to navigate social media (Steiner-Adair, 2015). Parents of school-aged children will participate by answering a questionnaire. There will also be an opportunity for parents to participate in a focus group.

Hashtags are used in social media to identify messages on a specific topic. The hashtags that will be used are #socialmediaparenting #iGen #parenting #socialmedia #digitalcitizenship #socialemotionallearning #unselfie #thebigdisconnect #digcit.

The flyer will encourage people to share the survey with others who want to help the researchers with their study and bring attention to the influences of social media on children and social-emotional practices. The researchers are posting a flyer explaining the research study on social media to attract participants who are familiar with using social media.

Assumptions

The researchers predict that elementary aged children are not adequately applying SEL competencies when they are active on social media. Parents are in need of helping their children navigate the digital world using SEL competencies. Since there are many areas to explore regarding the link between social media and SEL competencies, the questionnaire will clarify uncertainties. These hypotheses are inductive since information from the questionnaire will be used to gather more information on the needs of the issue of social media. The researchers assume that after their study is completed, they will uncover strategies to assist parents and educators help children have successful online interactions as digital citizens.

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. Chapter I consists of the purpose of the study, background, significance, research questions, and assumptions of the study. Chapter II further discusses the literature regarding social media, social-emotional learning, and digital citizenship. Chapter III gives an overview of the mixed method case study research design, including population, methodology, collection techniques and instruments, and data and analysis.

Chapter IV shares the results of our study and gives an interpretation of the data provided.

Chapter V presents our conclusions and recommendations for parents and educators.

Chapter II
Review of the Literature

Influence of Social Media

It was not very long ago that the term "social media" did not exist. Today it is hard to imagine a world without it. According to Merriam-Webster, the definition of social media is as follows, "forms of electronic communication (such as websites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as videos)." Jankauskaite (2015) define social media as the creation and exchange of content. Teaching students how to interact with social media is critical because students need to use social-emotional skills while exchanging content.

What is Social Media? When people think of social media, many think of Facebook or Instagram. According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) social media can be classified into six different types of categories: (1) collaborative projects (e.g., Wikipedia); (2) blogs; (3) content communities (e.g.,YouTube); (4) social networking (LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram); (5) virtual game-worlds; and (6) virtual social-worlds (e.g., Second Life) (Kaplan, A., & Haenlein, M., 2010). There are a lot of opportunities for content to be created and shared in these categories.

Williams (2015) says that there are three qualities of social media that humans value: "connection, transparency, and immediacy." Social media connected the world in ways one never could have imagined, which is connection quality. Through social media, many people have opened a window into their personal lives. They may share photos, thoughts, and opinions, which is referred to as transparency. When people share information on social media, it is instant and can be reshared indefinitely, which is immediacy. Social media has changed the way people interact.

Rise and Influence. Radio took thirty-eight years for users to reach fifty million. Television took thirteen years to reach fifty million users. Facebook took less than nine months to reach one-hundred million users and it only took nine months for iPhone applications to hit one billion (Patel, 2010). Social media is a transforming force. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, and Tumblr are just some of the tools that are transforming the internet. When used purposefully, these social media modalities are powerful tools with the potential for affecting positive change in the world.

Young people today are growing up in an age where they do not know what life was like without social media, however avenues for expressing themselves have always been around. They are digital natives, and this technology is a "fixture in their environment" (Rheingold, 2008). One problem is that even though these technology tools come intuitively for children, they lack the maturity to make good choices and are still in need of guidance.

To say that social media has become a popular means of communication would be an understatement. In fact, many people believe that social media and social networks are the primary means of communication today. According to Hutton and Fosdick (2011), "…social networks now have surpassed all other means of keeping in touch with people, even outstripping face-to-face contact in 2009." Going on social networks each day to catch up on information about friend's lives has become a regular occurrence. Many times people don't communicate with others but will post an update so their entire network can see it at once.

With access to technology, preteens and teens communicate through their social media accounts. They stay in touch with their friends and record their lives on these social platforms.

"For these digital natives, sharing and participating in the digital world is nearly a philosophy of life" (Garcia & Fernandez, 2016).

Challenge. Social media reaches into the lives of many young people and has the potential to influence their decisions. If not used correctly, social media can be hazardous and provide an overabundance of negative messages. Social media can "represent a widespread, readily available, and consistently accessed source of information for today's adolescents" (Moreno, 2014). In Moreno's article, *Influence of Social Media on Alcohol Use in Adolescents and Young Adults*, he talks about how there are many more messages glamorizing alcohol use on social media than interventions about abstaining from it. "Despite the broad reach of social media, the literature to date is scant on interventions using social media to reduce harmful alcohol consumption" (Moreno, 2014). Unfortunately, social media has been more successful at encouraging negative behaviors like teenage drinking instead of making positive changes.

Cyberbullying

On the internet, people have many different interactions with one another. These interactions are referred to as *cyberbehaviors* (Ortega, Del Rey, & Sanchez, 2012). Some of these behaviors that is concerning include cybergossip which can lead to cyberbullying (López-Pradas, Romera, Casas, & Ortega-Ruiz, 2017). Cyberbullying is a serious problem, where a person is intentionally targeted by another person through threats or embarrassed through texting, email, or social networking sites. Data collected between 2004-2010 through surveys indicated that cyberbullying victimization rates ranged from 20.8% to 40.6% (Luxton, D. D., June, J. D., & Fairall, J. M., 2012). This rise in cyberbullying can be due to the introduction of social media, which is negatively impacting children.

Cyberbullying incidents are in the rise (Borba, 2016).   Long gone are the days of the bully beating up someone for lunch money. Nowadays, online is where most of the bullying takes place, which is cyberbullying. Unfortunately, this is when someone lacks the social-emotional skills necessary for acceptable online behaviors. Sadly, this is becoming more and more common today.

Bullying and cyberbullying are a direct result of a lack of empathy (Pfetsch, 2017). When communicating via cyberspace, certain communication factors such as eye contact, facial expressions, body posture, voice tone, and other cues which regulate the interactive communication process can be nonexistent (Kiesler, Siegel, & McGuire, 1984). Not having these components between partners can make the communication feel more distant, disconnected, and impersonal. Cyberbullying behaviors can increase because the consequences of actions online are not always observed and the emotions and feelings of the other person are not shared (Steffgen, König, Pfetsch, & Melzer, 2011). Cognitively, this causes a disconnect from the consequences of actions done online and makes cyberbullying a very easy thing that can take place. It can be argued that building empathy and understanding in young people is more important than ever before.

Internet Addiction. Internet addiction is more common due to the rise of social media. The initial intent of social media was to connect people, not to have them addicted to scrolling (Newport, 2019). According to Cal Newport, (2019) the concept of looking at our phones constantly for social media updates did not exist when consumer smartphones first hit the market. Social media was originally developed as a tool that was used to check on friends or family occasionally.

Facebook re-engineered the social media experience before the company went public to raise their revenue for investors in two ways. Facebook shifted from people using the platform on a desktop to a mobile device (Newport, 2019). The second shift was from posting occasionally and checking on friends to a constant stream of incoming social approval indicators on the main feed (Newport, 2019). The social approval indicators include liking, commenting, reposting and auto tagging, which are numbers that show if people approve of you and your life. This shift of social media from something that people checked occasionally to something that people are constantly checking throughout the day was an intentional shift (Newport, 2019).

According to a survey conducted by Pew Research, "92% of teens report going online daily - including 24% who say they go online 'almost constantly'" (Lenhart, 2015). The line between daily internet use and internet addiction is becoming blurred. The internet is a way of life today as 99.8% of adolescents reported using the internet at home or in school (Kuss et al. 2013). As students' lives become more and more digital, it is critical that they are socially and emotionally intelligent.

While social media and the internet have the potential to be used in harmful ways, it can also have equal potential for being used as a force for good. It provides the ability to network with multitudes of people at the click of a button. People share opinions instantly that can be reshared indefinitely. Social media can bring people closer together than ever before, while at the same time leave people more disconnected than ever before.

Social media is powerful. As these tools become more and more sophisticated, they are also becoming more personal. What used to be text on a screen a few years ago can now be easily replaced with short videos documenting the intonation, inflection, expression, and passion

of the user. This is important because social media is being used to give people a voice. Now anyone can become an advocate for any cause they choose.

As student's lives grow online, they must be mindful of their digital footprint. "Students are enthusiastic digital citizens, but sometimes their enthusiasm trumps their maturity. Research tells us that, at the most basic level, children's social skills may be in decline from spending less face-to-face time and more time on screens" (Steiner-Adair, 2015).

Unfortunately, it is becoming more and more common to see students having two lives. At school, teachers teach about honest behavior and model honest behavior. Online, it is common for students to falsify information about themselves and others. Therefore, students are navigating two forms of themselves: the online self (the cool kid), and the perfect person (the well-behaved student at school). Due to students balancing their two identities, students are reporting an increase of social anxiety about socializing face to face. Students are even stating that they are avoiding parties and social settings because it is more fun to hang out online because they are in more control (Steiner-Adair, 2015).

Digital Citizenship

Students need to understand human, cultural, and societal issues related to technology while practicing legal and ethical behavior. Digital citizenship is critical because it teaches students the norms of appropriate behavior using technology and sets the stage for how students will work with others in a global, digital society (Ribble, 2008). Digital citizenship teaches students to use technology appropriately and enjoy its capabilities to become more productive. Educators need to teach empathy, which prepares students to think about the feelings of people before they post on the internet (Ribble, 2014).

Current Implementation. Lack of digital citizenship awareness can lead to problematic student conduct within schools. For digital citizenship to be successful, all parties including parents, teachers, administrators, and students need to understand and practice digital citizenship (Hollandsworth et al., 2011).

A 2011 study (Hollansworth et al.) revealed that educators need to understand more about digital citizenship for proper implementation. Less than half of the schools teach their students about social networking sites and cell phone etiquette (Hollandsworth et al., 2011). With the ubiquitous presence of social media, there is a need for teachers and parents to understand the importance of digital citizenship.

Need for Change. Lack of digital citizenship awareness can lead to problematic student conduct within schools (Hollandsworth et al., 2011). Parents, teachers, administrators, and students need to understand and practice digital citizenship (Hollandsworth et al., 2011). Technology is not disappearing. Not teaching students about social media and digital citizenship does not mean that students are not going to use social media. Children need to be taught digital citizenship from multiple angles including teachers and parents to understand the importance of digital citizenship.

Facebook and other social media platforms allow students to post on other users sites anonymously and although schools try, there cannot be enough firewalls and restrictions in place to handle online events (Hollandsworth et al., 2011). Kids today are less empathetic, which can cause issues with unchecked online use. Schools need to find innovative ways to enhance relationship building using technology (Ribble & Miller, 2013).

As technology is changing, parents need to have the support to explore new techniques that enable their children to think critically and inspire them to learn. Children retain material better when they can apply the knowledge to real-world settings. With technology increasing opportunity for interactions across countries, teachers and parents need to instill emotional awareness and cultural competence within its students to allow for meaningful interactions and relationships (Erstad, O., Eickelmann, B., & Eichhorn, K., 2015).

Mike Ribble (2008) outlines a method to implement digital citizenship in the classroom. This cycle of integration includes four stages: awareness, guided practice, modeling, and demonstration, and feedback and analysis. The cycle of integration helps students focus on their actions when using technology to reflect on areas of strength and areas of opportunity.

Ribble (2008) hopes that this reflection model will open the dialogue at home and in school so students use technology appropriately. The first stage is awareness where students learn what is appropriate and inappropriate behavior using technology. The second phase is guided practice where educators provide their students with opportunities to use the technology under their guidance. This provides a safe environment where the students can make mistakes and have the support of the teacher and parent. The third stage is modeling and demonstration where teachers plan time with their students to model appropriate behavior on technology. The fourth stage is feedback and analyses where students and their teachers discuss the use of technology and how they can properly use technology. Ribble encourages communication between the school setting and home, which identifies the behavior that adults expect from students to hold them accountable (Ribble, 2008).

Technology and online learning present challenges but also opportunities for SEL integration. Students today are hungry for the adults in their lives to model, show and teach them pro-social strategies for dealing with life's intricate social dynamics online as well as in real life (Steiner-Adair, 2015).

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

SEL can cause confusion because the term can be used to refer to many different types of programs including school-based programs, mental health, and character education programs (Hoffman, 2009). SEL programs refer to the process whereby students and adults learn and apply knowledge and skills to effectively manage their emotions. The procedures and skills acquired through SEL allow children and adults to develop positive relationships in their lives and make responsible decisions (CASEL, 2018).

Five Competencies. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "Intelligence plus character-that is the goal of true education." Developing higher emotional intelligence is at the forefront of SEL education. Emotional intelligence (EI) consists of five core competencies to teach students and adults. Self-awareness is the ability to recognize one's emotions and values and assess strengths and limitations. Self-management involves setting and achieving goals. Social awareness is showing empathy for the feelings of others. Relationship skills include maintaining healthy relationships, working efficiently in groups as both leader and team member, and dealing constructively with conflict. Responsible decision making involves making ethical choices about behavior (Bradberry, & Greaves, 2009; CASEL, 2018; Elias and Moceri 2012).

Classroom Programs. If done correctly and efficiently, a quality character education program, "creates an integrated culture of character that supports and challenges students and adults to

strive for excellence" (Licona, 2014). Successful SEL programs extend beyond school life and affect out of school learning opportunities (Osher et al., 2016). Six key criteria are common for effective SEL programs. Those criteria are, "(a) developmentally appropriate, (b) culturally relevant, (c) systemic, (d) comprehensive, (e) evidence-based, and (f) forward thinking" (Osher, 2016).

Although additional planning in the classroom is required to ensure proper implementation of SEL throughout the day, research is growing regarding the positive effects of SEL in the class. Research shows SEL to improve student behavior and increase student academic achievement (Hoffman, 2009). Students who participate in SEL programs grow both academically, and their behavior improves in the classroom because they are better able to handle stressful situations (Durlak et al., 2011).

Although most SEL programs take place in the classroom, there are game-based SEL programs. Students who completed the eight-week SEL game-based course Zoo U, showed increased empathy, higher impulse control, and responsible decision making. Children report feeling greater self-efficacy and social satisfaction after completing game-based SEL programs (Craig et al., 2016; Iaosanurak et al., 2016). Although this program was successful, students need to learn how to have face-to-face interactions with others to develop true and lasting empathetic skills (Borba, 2016).

SEL is quickly becoming an essential part of the education narrative. Many people often ask the question, "Does it work?" According to one meta-analysis of 213 school-based SEL programs, the answer is *yes* (Durlak, 2011). This meta-analysis studied 270,034 students ranging from kindergarten through high school. Students who were involved in an SEL program

demonstrated improved academic performance, attitudes, behavior, and overall social-emotional skills (Durlak, 2011).

By implementing the SEL competencies, students will improve their attitudes and beliefs about themselves, others, and school (Durlak, 2011). To get students to understand these competencies, educators need to teach and model the application of social-emotional skills in ways that allow students to apply the competencies daily. Educators need to establish a safe and engaging learning environment involving peer and school-wide community-building activities. With SEL in place, students will improve both behaviorally and academically.

In order for students to grasp the importance of SEL, SEL needs to be in the classroom instruction in addition to after-school activities. SEL needs to be a key feature of teacher preparation and ongoing professional development. This will create a healthy school climate, which will support the emotional development of the students (Weissberg et al., 2013).

Based on research, it would be advantageous to implement SEL as early as kindergarten and continue education throughout elementary school. Research has shown statistical significance between SEL skills taught in kindergarten and positive behavior choices later in life (Jones, Greenberg, & Crowley, 2015). Schools should implement SEL practices early because research shows that social competence is essential for schools to thrive and succeed (Stoiber, 2011).

Implementation (School Leaders). Effective character education programs include all of the stakeholders in a school including parents, educators, and students (Licona, 2014). By developing skills in self-awareness and general relationship skills through SEL, children report feeling closer to teachers (Rimm-Kaufman, 2006). Strong relationships between teachers and

students create a safe environment in the classroom, which allows students to take risks and learn.

Effective SEL programs affect the whole-school climate and reach beyond the walls of the school into the student's homes and the communities (Snyder, 2014). There has been an urgency for school-based programs to incorporate SEL due to bullying and school shootings. Creating supportive and safe school environments is a necessity, and social-emotional instruction is an effective method to create a positive environment (Osher et al., 2016). SEL needs to be taught in both the classroom, after school programs, and at home. It is critical that coaches and parents have an understanding of SEL and the competencies being taught during the school day, so they hold the kids to the same standards as teachers do (Weissberg et al., 2013).

With proper application, teachers are more committed to professional development and helping the students. Teachers who teach at a school with SEL programs in place feel as though the classroom values both their emotional health and the psychological health of its students (Collie et al., 2011). Having a positive school culture where teachers are encouraged to seek professional development will only positively impact the students.

Teachers believe in the potential for SEL to transform schools by creating environments where students and teachers want to come to school, build relationships, and learn together (Bridgeland et al, 2013). Learning new SEL approaches may seem stressful, but once teachers' learn how to implement SEL into their classrooms efficiently, their sense of teaching efficacy grows, which results in higher job satisfaction. Teachers who implement SEL consistently feel a greater sense of community and lower stress in their lives (Collie et al., 2011).

Teachers can inspire students, teach them how to achieve success and overcome failure. 95% of teachers think that social-emotional skills are teachable, which can significantly impact the social development of students (Bridgeland et. al, 2013).

Implementation Students. SEL can accelerate students' intrinsic motivation to learn because the SEL competencies teach students to be more aware of their emotions. This heightened awareness helps students be more attentive and engaged in their work, which creates a student-centric environment (Bridgeland et al., 2013).

Research shows improved student behavior and increases in student academic achievement (Hoffman, 2009). A study revealed that students who participated in SEL programs grew eleven percentile points in academic achievement (Durlak et al., 2011). Not only did these students show tremendous gains academically, but their behavior improved in the classroom and they were better equipped to handle stressful situations.

When educators teach SEL in the classroom on a daily basis, children grow academically and socially. Imagine the gains that children can make when SEL is sewn into the fabric of a school and home. SEL develops well-rounded students who are eager to embrace challenges. Challenge is an essential component of human development, which allows students to solve problems in the real world.

Parents have the opportunity to continue the social-emotional development of their children at home through real-world application. Confining students to a curriculum where students do not see the real-world application does not allow students to make connections (McKay-Jackson, 2014). Students must be urged to think critically and help solve problems

within the school and community. When students can see the real-world application and are challenged to think critically, empathy will increase within students.

The parent's role in children's digital lives is paramount. In order to expect children to have appropriate digital practices, parents must lead by example. Like the children, parents are also adapting to this disruptive technology. "Tech-centered parenting may be perceived by a child as having an emotionally absent or neglectful parent" (Steiner-Adair, 2013).

Melania Trump is promoting positive behavior on social media among America's youth as part of her "Be Best" initiative. Melania Trump addressed that social media is part of our children's lives today and has the power to be used in many positive ways, but social media can be used in harmful ways when it is used inappropriately. To promote the positive use of social media, adults must play an active role in guiding children to use best practices on social media (Phelps, 2018).

Steinberg (2005) created Ten Core Principles of Good Parenting and Patrikakou (2016) adapted the principles and interrelated them with technology and media use. Patrikakou (2016) created the following chart as a resource to help parents help their children navigate the digital world.
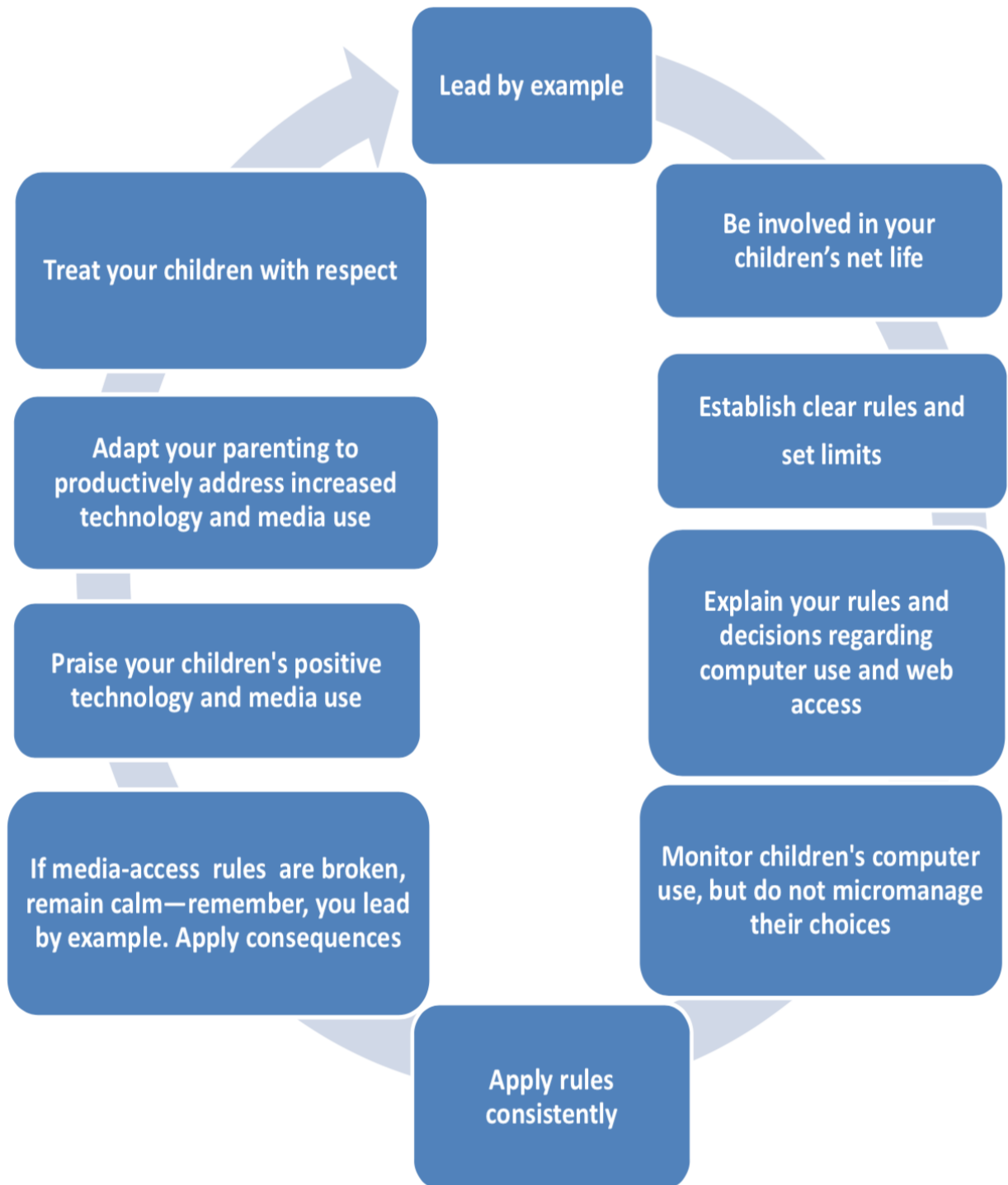
Figure 2 Patrikakou (2016)

What does character education look like in the 21st century? This is the driving question

that needs to be answered today. Character education is "the intentional effort to develop in

young people core ethical and performance values that are widely affirmed across all cultures." (Licona, 2014).

Students today are more digitally connected to their peers than ever before. Learning is no longer just what happened in the classroom during the day with instruction from a teacher. "…students spend as much (or more) time online in an informal learning environment, interacting with peers and receiving feedback, than they do with their teachers in the traditional classroom" (Phillips et al. 2010). Students are constantly learning from all sorts of stimulation around them and it carries on long after the school day primarily through social media. Students today are both consumers and producers of this content.

Technology has changed the way we live and relate in the world. Students are often the first to embrace these new forms of technology but sadly lack the maturity to use it in a healthy way. "Youth currently spend an average of 8.33 hours per day – more hours than a full-time working adult – engaging with technology-driven media" (Rideout, Roberts, & Foehr, 2005). Character education, digital citizenship, and social-emotional learning must not only be taking place in the schools, but also reaching into the after school life of students as well.

Just because students are using these technology tools today does not necessarily mean they know what they are doing. Parents and educators are presented with a challenge, but also a great opportunity. In order to fully prepare students for the world they will inherit, "students need adult guides and mentors willing to create online learning environments that allow students to rehearse for future performances in social media environments" (Stokes, 2011). The challenge is how to develop the social-emotional skills in students to make them successful in their real

lives as well as their digital ones. Teaching students to be responsible global citizens and teaching them to create positive content for their social media worlds is necessary.

Parents and teachers have a unique opportunity to shape the social-emotional development of students today. As we look at the world, it is easy to become discouraged. The messages we hear on a daily basis can be divisive, untrue, and unkind. Mass shootings are sadly becoming part of the American narrative. This is the world in which students are being brought up. Parents need to provide the necessary tools to their children for filtering through stories online and help their children become emotionally intelligent people by inserting positive messages to the conversation.

President Theodore Roosevelt said, "To educate someone in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society." If schools succeed in teaching core curriculum to students but they lack the social-emotional and character components; schools have failed that generation and it will not be without consequences. Parents and teachers have a duty to teach the whole child and convey that message in a way that is timely and relevant.

Teaching adolescents digital citizenship is only the first step. Learning how to navigate this uncertain world is vital for their survival in the digital age. Teaching students to be good digital citizens and then how to use social media and social networking sites in a positive way is the next step.

So much of social media is centered on self. Selfies, my account, my info, my friends, are just some examples. Teaching students social-emotional skills to use beyond their physical lives and into their digital lives, building empathy, could revolutionize a generation.

Linking Social Media & SEL

Young people today need to be taught the proper way to use social media. "As learning becomes more screen-based, and students connect and learn together outside of regular school hours, it's essential to balance increased tech use with stronger programs in social-emotional learning and other steps to help students manage their dual lives in their bicultural online/offline school community" (Steiner-Adair, 2015).

Like it or not, this is a part of culture today. "Social media is changing the parameters of how people and organisations interact and operate," (Swan 2012). By ignoring it or expecting them to figure it out on their own would be a disservice. Students today are digital citizens of the world and they need to be brought up as such. To only teach them social-emotional skills for the physical world instead of the digital world would not yield positive results.

Parents can serve as guides and mentors. Parents cannot effectively prepare their children for navigating the online world without explaining and showing their children social media. Children who can effectively navigate and positively contribute on social media have the power to make their voices heard (Stokes, 2011). "Children need to be formally taught these process skills, which facilitate knowledge acquisition, problem solving and citizenship" (Jolls, 2008). Children also need to know how to filter messages and make responsible choices in regards to technology.

Social media is not going away and nor should it. "The need for SEL may even be greater now knowing to the impacts of digital technology on learning, work, interpersonal relationships" (Osher, 2016). The generation which grew up without social media has a responsibility to the generation which is engulfed in it. That responsibility is to make sure they

are taught these essential social-emotional skills and infuse it into their digital lives. That way social networking will bring about the positive changes this generation needs.

In January of 2011, millions of Egyptians were calling for the end of President Hosni Mubarak's regime. They were protesting in the streets but their message was far-reaching beyond Cairo through Facebook and Twitter (DiCharia, 2015). As social network sites get more and more personal (use of video chips, ex. Snapchat) these movements will have more emotion conveyed. "Out of sight, out of mind" is becoming an old and untrue adage" (DiCharia, 2015). Social media can be used with socially and emotionally intelligent purposes to influence change while giving their message a voice and a face for multitudes around the world to get behind.

Technology and online learning present a challenge but also an opportunity in regards to social-emotional learning. Children today are hungry for adults in their life to model, show and teach them pro-social strategies for dealing with life's intricate social dynamics online as well as in real life (Steiner-Adair, 2015).

Chapter III
Methods

Introduction

The purpose of this mixed-methods sequential phase design study is to explore the parent perception of the relationship of social-emotional learning (SEL) and social media use in the behavior of elementary students. At this stage in the research, the SEL competencies focus on management of emotions, goals, empathy, relationships, and responsible decision making (CASEL, 2018). This chapter addresses the research methodology used in this study, describes the participants, and describes the procedures used to collect and analyze the data. The study is designed to examine the impacts of social media on children's behavior and how to best use SEL competencies to develop the children as digital citizens using a qualitative and quantitative approach. This chapter describes the procedures used to answer the following questions:

Research Questions

1. What is the parent perception of the relationship between social-emotional competencies and their influence on elementary-aged children to be good digital citizens?

2. What is the parent perception of the ways that elementary aged children use social-emotional competencies on social media?

3. What is the parent perception of the factors that can make social media challenging and or beneficial for elementary aged children to navigate?

Context/Setting of the Study

This case study was a mixed-methods study. Through the use of questionnaires, the researchers got a general sense of how students use social media and understand the feelings of the parents in regards to how social media is impacting student behavior. The questionnaire, in

Appendix C, consists of questions using a rating scale and open-ended questions. A flyer, in Appendix A, was posted on the researchers' social media page to get participants, who are parents of elementary aged children or who have had elementary aged children within the last five years, to answer the questionnaire. Elementary aged children are students in grades kindergarten through fifth grade. The rationale of including parents who have had elementary students in the past five years is because these parents may have valuable insight into their children's experiences with social media. Receiving feedback from parents who have had elementary aged children in the past five years gives the researchers valuable data regarding the influence that social media can potentially have on students based on the limitations placed on them while in elementary school.

The flyer explained to the participants about the study and how their participation gave valuable information about the effects of social media on student behavior. The flyer had the researchers' emails so participants could contact the researchers after the questionnaire to participate in a follow up focus group if desired. The option of a focus group after the questionnaire was stated on the flyer.   The flyer outlines that the questionnaire only took about 15 minutes and consisted of 18 questions. The link to the questionnaire (created via SurveyMonkey©) is on the flyer so participants could click on the link to complete the questionnaire. Once participants email the researchers, the researchers emailed the participants with the date, time, location of the follow-up focus group.

The questionnaire was intended for parents of elementary aged children or who have had elementary aged children within the last five years. The parents had access to technology including social media because they are responding via technology. The researchers' rationale

for choosing parents who are familiar with the use of social media is because the research is discovering the impacts of the social media on children, therefore it is necessary for participants to be familiar with social media. The participants' answers gave insight into the effects of social media and how to navigate the relationship between technology and SEL competencies to build digital citizens.

A case study design was used because there is not extensive research on the topic of SEL linked to the use of social media. Since there is little known information about this particular phenomena, a case study was the most useful in generating support for the impact of SEL competencies and the use of social media for elementary school students (Leedy & Ormrod, 2016; Steiner-Adair, 2015). In addition, the researchers took special interest in this topic as they work at a school in Florida.

Although a substantial amount of research exists for SEL, digital citizenship, and social media, there is not extensive research available regarding the impact of SEL linked to the use social media (Steiner-Adair, 2015). As such, there is a need to gather information from parents of elementary students to understand the impact social media on elementary students. Through the use of both questions using a rating scale and open-ended questions, parents gave rich insight into the impacts of social media on their children and how SEL competencies can help develop their children into responsible digital citizens. After the questionnaire, parents had the opportunity to contact the researchers for a follow up focus group, which gave the researchers further insight into the personal stories of the impact of social media on elementary aged children. The parents had access to the researchers email on the flyer to contact them to potentially participate in the follow-up focus group.

The researchers listened to what the parents communicated in the questionnaires and focus group to further understand the impact of social media on children. The focus group was conducted, coded, and transcribed causing themes to emerge. The researchers strived to understand the impacts of SEL competencies, digital citizenship, and social media on students' behavior.

Description of Population and/or Sample

The target population was parents of elementary aged children or who have had elementary aged children within the last five years. Participants lived in the United States. This study was a purposive sample, with a possibility of snowball sampling (Leedy & Ormrod, 2016). A flyer was available on social media because the study was looking into the effects of social media on student behavior. The flyer explained the research study and asked for parents who wanted to discuss the impact of social media on student behavior, which yielded greater understanding into the culture of this specific issue regarding social media (Leedy & Ormrod, 2016). The researchers received at least 100 questionnaires completed by parents of elementary aged-children or who have had elementary aged-children in the past five years. The researchers continued to share the questionnaire on their social media pages, hashtags, and twitter chats until saturation was met.

The participants were willing to share the effects of social media on their children's behavior and shared social-emotional strategies used to enforce positive behavior choices. After the questionnaire was completed, if parents wanted to further contribute to the research study, they had the opportunity to reach out to the researchers to participate in a focus group. The information for the focus group was on the flyer and there was also be a message at the end of

the questionnaire reminding participants to contact the researchers to participate in the focus group.

The focus group consisted of five participants. The focus group took approximately 45 minutes. The interviews were taped and the researchers stopped holding focus groups once they started hearing the same answers (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Research Design – Rationale for Design

A mixed-methods research study with a sequential phase design was conducted. The study used quantitative data to understand the age when students first started using social media, the impact of social media on their behavior, and if parents felt pressure to give into allowing their children to have access to social media. The qualitative data will gave the researchers more insight into the underlying reasons why parents choose to allow their children to have access to social media or choose not to allow their children to have access to social media. Since the impacts of social media on student behavior are still developing, the qualitative data gave the researchers more insight into the effects of social media on student behavior.

A rating (Likert) scale was used for some of the questions so the data could be quantitatively analyzed. Rating scales prove to be useful when a behavior or attitude towards a particular phenomenon is being evaluated, which is why the researchers employed the use of rating scales (Leedy & Ormrod, 2016). Also, rating scales allow the researchers to quantify the parents' feelings of SEL competencies, digital citizenship, and social media (Leedy & Ormrod, 2016). The rating scale used yielded interval data because each answer had equal units (Leedy & Ormrod, 2016). The researchers statistically analyzed the data derived from the surveys using

descriptive statistics analyzing the mean, median, and mode. The data from the questionnaires assisted in creating the semi-structure questions that were implemented in the focus groups.

Qualitative interviews were conducted using a conversational mode to ask the open-ended semi-structured questions to get the participants to use their own words to undercover the central phenomena at work (Yin, 2016). The focus group was semi-structured that used themes derived from the questionnaire responses. The focus group took place at 7pm on Monday, March 25th, 2019 via conference call that was convenient to all members participating. After the focus group was conducted, the interviews were transcribed and coded.

Methodological Assumptions

It was an assumption that the parents were honest when answering the questionnaire and the interview questions. The researchers' assumptions were from a constructivist view because they were relying on elementary school parents' perceptions and interpretations of social media and the impacts of social-emotional learning competencies in the interviews. Another assumption was that students with higher SEL practices and skills would have a more successful online experience with social media.

Data Collection

The sample of this study was comprised of parents who have elementary aged children or who have had children in elementary school in the past five years. Each of the parents had access to the questionnaire through SurveyMonkey© via the flyer on social media. The following steps were carried out:

- Step 1: Obtain approval from Lynn University Institutional Review Board (IRB)

- Step 2: After approval from Lynn University IRB, the researchers posted the flyer (in

    Appendix A) to their social media pages. The flyer gives a brief overview of the

    requirements of the participants and gives access to the questionnaire.

- Step 3: The first page of the questionnaire is the consent page so once "ok" was clicked

    the parent was able to continue onto the questionnaire.

- Step 4: Answers from the questionnaire were collected by the researchers via

    SurveyMonkey©

- Step 5: The researchers email address was posted on the flyer for follow up interviews.

    The participants could contact the researchers if they wanted to participate in a follow up

    interview. The participants signed an informed consent form before the interviews took

    place. Due to anonymity of the questionnaire, the researchers have no way to contact the

    participants, which is why the participants had to email the researchers.

Ethical Considerations

The most significant ethical consideration of this study is the informed consent form that

was read and accepted by each participant. It is ethical to ensure that each participant clearly

understands the expectations, scope, and purpose of the research before willingly becoming a

participant. The privacy of our subjects is imperative. The dissertation proposal was submitted

to Lynn University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) to receive approval to conduct the study.

This questionnaire was anonymous and there is no identifying information known to the

researchers. All participants remained anonymous while the data was collected and analyzed.

No IP addresses were kept or known to the researchers. The answers to the questionnaire will be

stored for two years on a password protected computer and will be permanently deleted after that time.

In the qualitative portion of the study, the interviews were held at a location that is convenient to the participants. The focus group took place using a conference call. Each participant received an arbitrary code number that was used on any written documents rather than the participant's name to ensure confidentiality (Leedy & Ormrod, 2016). The data received from the interviews and the informed consents will be kept separately in a locked folder on the researchers' computers. The data will be deleted after two years. When the researchers communicate with one another, the researchers spoke in person, phone, or by email to ensure that the documents were not be compromised by computer hackers (Leedy & Ormrod, 2016).

Risks and Benefits

The risks to participants were minimal as the participants associated with this study was confidential. There were no major risks to participants associated with this study. However, if participants felt uncomfortable they could have exited the online survey at any time as well as asked the researchers to stop audio recording during focus groups. All data will be destroyed and shredded. The benefit of the study is that the participants can help others by sharing their own experiences.

Data Collection and Recording

The researchers used an online questionnaire, Survey Monkey©. Survey Monkey© is an online questionnaire which provides feedback from parents the researchers are surveying. Before entering the questionnaire, the participants read the informed consent and clicked "OK" before they moved on to complete the questionnaire. Participants were not allowed to move

forward in the questionnaire, unless they agreed to the informed consent. By clicking "OK" the participants agreed to participate in the questionnaire.

For the qualitative portion of the study, there was a need to record the focus group taking place. Before the focus group was conducted, the researchers obtained informed consent from the participants. To be thorough, there were two iPhones recording the focus group in case one stopped working. The focus group was transcribed by the researchers. After the researchers transcribed the focus group, the researchers double checked the transcriptions by listening to the interviews and made adjustments accordingly. Lastly, the focus group was coded by the researchers.

Data Analysis

The study used a mixed-method design simultaneously with a rating scale and open-ended questions in the questionnaire. The rating scale asked questions that correlated with numbers for answers using descriptive statistics such as cross tabulations, averages, means, modes, and medians. The open-ended questions were analyzed using the qualitative method of coding and gathering themes that emerged. Qualitative focus group questions were derived from the online survey results.

Delimitations

This study is not studying middle schools or high schools because elementary school is an important time for students to develop the social-emotional skills to be successful later in life (Lahey, 2016).

Limitations

One limitation in the study is the questionnaires being distributed online and the researchers do not know if the participants are parents. To mitigate this limitation, the researchers listed the requirements of the participants in both the flyer and the informed consent. The participants agreed that they were a parent of an elementary aged child or have had an elementary aged child in the past five years.

For the interview portion of the research, the researchers were limited by geographic location. The researchers mitigated this limitation by utilizing phone interviews.

It is important to understand the qualitative portion of this study involved interviews and questionnaires, which are based on parent perception. To mitigate this limitation, multiple interviews and questionnaires were conducted until the same themes appeared and saturation was met.

Summary

The methodology chapter discusses how the researchers plan to conduct a study on the impact of social media on the behaviors of elementary students. Parents of elementary aged students or who have had elementary students in the past five years were the key participants in this study. The questionnaire was available via a flyer on social media and outlined the purpose of the research study. Parents who want to share more information about the effects of social media on their children had the opportunity to email the researchers to participate in a focus group. In this chapter, the researchers discuss the purpose of the study, research questions, research design, participants, ethical considerations, data collection, data analysis, and limitations.

Chapter IV

Findings

Introduction

Technology and social media are a constant force in children's lives. Understanding the parent perception of the influence of social media on their children is a critical piece of the puzzle. Parent perception gives a glimpse of the positive interactions and challenges that their children face daily on social media. The study focuses on the parent perception of how their children utilize the SEL competencies on social media. Through the use of questionnaires and a focus group, the researchers found themes that emerged from the data to understand the parent perception of the relationship between children utilizing SEL competencies and the influence of social media on their children.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine how social media affects the behavior of elementary aged children and how to apply the specific SEL competencies students need to develop to have a successful online experience. In regards to social media, a successful online experience looks like students following good role models who post and share positive messages. Another indicator of a successful online experience is having the self-awareness to post content and messages that encourage others rather than hurt others. Digital citizenship skills for children are crucial. However, they do not infuse the SEL competencies from the offline lives of children into their online lives. By using the SEL competencies of self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision making, relationship skills, and social awareness in their offline lives,

students can develop these SEL competencies into their digital lives. SEL competencies are developed in children by educators, parents, and influential adults consistently modeling respect and positive behaviors that enable children to grow into caring adults (CASEL, 2018).

Research Questions

The questions below guided the study.

1. What is the parent perception of the relationship between social-emotional competencies and their influence on elementary-aged children to be good digital citizens?

2. What is the parent perception of the ways that elementary aged children use social-emotional competencies on social media?

3. What is the parent perception of the factors that can make social media challenging and or beneficial for elementary aged children to navigate?

The research process began with the researchers posting flyers about the questionnaire on their social media pages. The researchers continued to repost the flyer, which identified the criteria of the participants, on their social media page with hashtags to get as many respondents as possible. Multiple people reposted the flyer that the researchers posted onto their social media pages, which caused more people to complete the questionnaire. The researchers continued to post the questionnaire until the number of participants stalled. The questionnaire closed after two weeks. One hundred twelve participants completed the questionnaire.

In addition to the questionnaire, the researchers conducted a focus group. This focus group consisted of five parents who completed the questionnaire. These parents either expressed interest in participating in the focus group or the researchers invited the parents to participate. The focus group took place after the survey closed. The questions for the focus group were developed after the researchers read through the results of the questionnaire and identified themes that needed further study. The following questions were asked to the participants during the semi-structured interview:

1. The questionnaire revealed many parents were noticing that their children were feeling anxious with technology. What do you notice in children when they use social media?

2. The questionnaire revealed that when devices were taken away, children would become anxious or agitated. If this is the result, why allow these devices?

3. Do your children face a social pressure to be in communication with their friends? Do you put limits in place?

4. The survey revealed that 50% of children typically spend about 1 hour on a digital device each day, but 70% of parents revealed that they spend 2-5 hours a day on their devices outside of work. Why is this disconnect significant?

The participants of the focus group were all able to share unique contributions. Participant A is the mother of a 6th-grade girl and a 4th-grade girl who attend public schools. Participant B is the mother of an 8th-grade boy, a 4th-grade boy, and 2nd-grade girl who attend a private religious school. Participant C is the mother of an 11th-grade girl, 9th-grade girl, and 6th-grade girl who attend a private independent school. Participant D is the mother of a

5th-grade boy and a 1st-grade girl who attend a public school. Participant E is the mother of a

college senior, a college freshman, and a 9th-grade boy who attend a private independent school.

Due to the questionnaire being accessed by the internet, the questionnaire was completed

by people from all over the United States. The highest percentage of participants were from the

Southern region of the United States. Below shows the graph of the people from the different

regions of the United States.

TABLE 4.0: PARTICIPANT'S LOCATION

Select the region of the United States that you live in.

Answered: 112   Skipped: 0
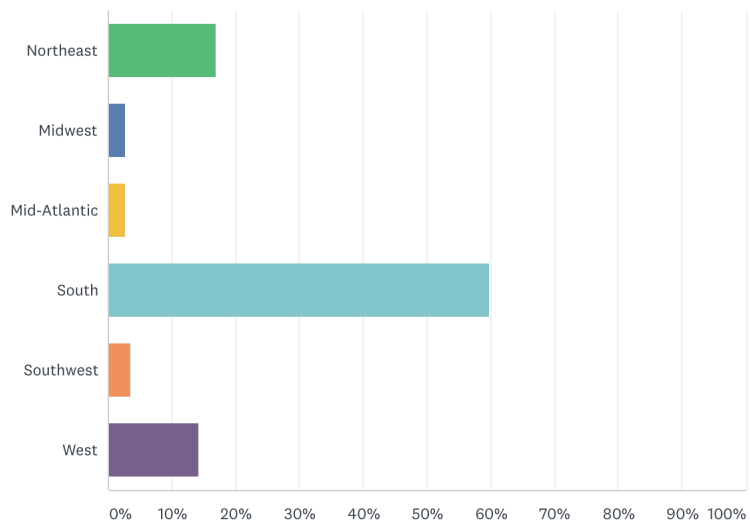
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Northeast	16.96%	19
Midwest	2.68%	3
Mid-Atlantic	2.68%	3
South	59.82%	67
Southwest	3.57%	4
West	14.29%	16
TOTAL		112

The participants identified the grades of their children, which helps the researchers

understand the ages of the children who are using technology, specifically social media. The

participants selected all the grades that apply if they have multiple children. There was a wide

distribution across grade levels. The highest percent of children are in Pre-K and younger with

31% of participants and kindergarten with 23% of participants. This is important to note because

many of the questions ask about technology and social media, which is why many of the

responses claimed that social media is not yet an issue in their households merely because their

children are young. Below is the graph of the grades that the participants' children are in.

TABLE 4.1: GRADES OF PARTICIPANTS' CHILDREN

My child(ren) are in grades (click all that apply):

Answered: 112   Skipped: 0
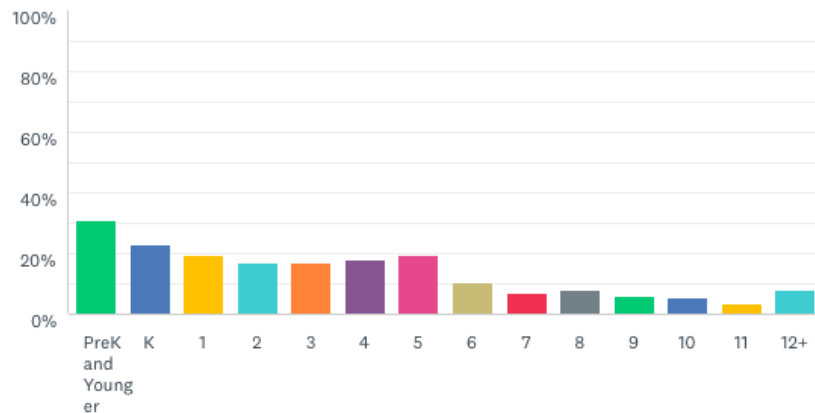
The children of the parents who completed the questionnaire came from all types of

schools including religious schools, private schools, independent schools, charter schools and

homeschool. Parents of children from public schools was the highest percentage who completed

the questionnaire with 53.7% of respondents. The next highest response rate was from parents of

children who attend private schools, which was 25% of the respondents.

TABLE 4.2: TYPE OF SCHOOL OF PARTICIPANTS' CHILDREN

What type of school does your student attend?

Answered: 112   Skipped: 0
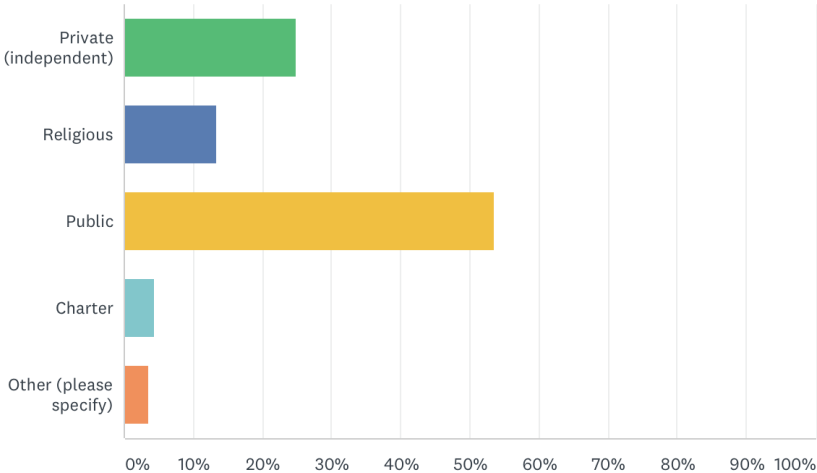
ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
▼ Private (independent)		25.00%	28
▼ Religious		13.39%	15
▼ Public		53.57%	60
▼ Charter		4.46%	5
▼ Other (please specify)	Responses	3.57%	4
TOTAL			112

Research Question #1:

What is the parent perception of the relationship between social-emotional competencies and

their influence on elementary-aged children to be good digital citizens?

Parents consistently expressed the importance of having conversations about social media in both the questionnaire and the focus group. Parents discussed how they speak with their children about the importance of watching age-appropriate content online and their children understanding what age-appropriate content entails. These conversations are focused on building the child's self-awareness to know what is acceptable for them to watch and do on social media according to their emotional development.

Another theme that emerged through the questionnaire and focus group is the importance of having meals with their children to discuss the events of the day and what constitutes true happiness. By having conversations with their children and asking their children what part of their day went well and how to make it better, parents are teaching their children how to reflect. Reflection allows children to be self-aware of their decisions that they make and develop their social-awareness to have stronger relationships.

> "We talk about what makes us happy, what good things happened in the day. We talk about what was not a good part of our day and how we can make it better. We talk about who supports us and how we can reach out to others if needed. We talk about what we have and what we are lucky to have, we frequently discuss how there are people with less than us and more then us and how we are all equals and deserve equal rights to school, health, food, housing and how we can help others. By volunteering, giving things we no longer need and getting things for others. We eat 2-3 meals a day together and have these conversations at that time usually."

> "My wife and I teach social-emotional online skills to our children by focusing on what is appropriate for them to access and have them understand that anything out on the internet is public and permanent. The internet is for connectivity, not a complete replacement for personal interaction or a place to play out personal relationships (ie don't get into arguments with friends or others online)."

"I emphasize kindness & inclusivity in real life interactions & try to highlight how certain words or behaviors make others feel even when unintentional."

Participant 3 from our focus group revealed a conversation between she and her daughter. This conversation shows the social pressures that children face from others and this mother explained how she navigated the conversation in a respectful manner. By having an open dialogue with children about the use of technology and social media, this allows children to learn how to utilize SEL competencies on social media.

"We have rules… whatever they post they have to send it to us first. My oldest wanted to post a picture of her(self) on the beach, and my husband and I were not happy with it but she is almost 18 and she's gotta start making decisions for herself. So we asked her, 'What's the reason? Why? You have to explain to us why you want to do this because you know this goes against how we feel and you are representing our family and she had a very valid argument. She said, 'Dad and Mom, if I don't post, all of my friends post this, and if I don't then people think I don't think I am pretty myself, so why should they think I'm pretty. And I was really taken aback by that… Others will think I don't have self worth for myself (if I don't post this). And here we are saying the opposite, you post yourself in a bikini. That was the very first time we had a clash on social media and it was not huge. Dang, what kind of pressure are these kids facing that they have to do these kinds of things?"

In addition to conversations between parents and children about the development of the SEL competencies in relation to social media, parents expressed the importance of role-playing to help children develop SEL competencies that can be utilized using social media.

"I knew to role play about the best ways to interact on social media from the time he was old enough to understand…. When he was younger, we would talk about what to post/how to answer, lots of role-playing and thinking about responses before doing it. How would that make you feel? Etc"

Adults modeling appropriate online behavior is a theme that continued to emerge throughout the questionnaire and the focus group. Children are looking up to adults to guide them and they are influenced by the examples that adults set forth.

"And we believe demonstrating in ourselves is the best teacher of all."

"I model it in my conversations as I use social media. We also limit our time and the children know this. We use the screen time app to limit ours and the kids usage."

Parents revealed through the questionnaire and focus group the importance of being part of their children's digital lives. Some parents take an active role in their children's digital lives such as playing alongside them in video games, which allows parents to understand how their children are using technology.

"I'm that mom that goes into the room while he's playing and I say hi to all the boys he is playing with… I know that drives my son nuts, but I don't care (Participant 4)."

"My husband plays video games with my 9th grader so that he can monitor his online presence."

"My brother and sister-in-law both follow him on SnapChat (as do I, but they are better at it!) and told me about some questionable posts when he was first on Snapchat, so that I could follow up with him."

Another theme revealed through the data was parents establishing firm rules and placing limits on devices used. Placing limits on devices helps children develop the SEL competencies necessary to navigate social media use by limiting the amount of time that they use technology.

"It's a hard world to navigate with them growing up in social media world. It had to have time limits and we have those in place."

"He knows he will (lose) his phone/device if the history is ever cleared from it. Now, that he's over 16, I feel pretty confident that he's doing the right thing, but I do absolutely still check in from time to time."

"I have told my children to only respond/comment in a positive way to their friends posts. I have also told them that they are not allowed to accept follow requests from names they don't know. As far as seeing when friends are together and they aren't included I have told them that, "not everybody can be invited to everything all the time", I have also told them that if someone comments negatively to one of their posts they are not allowed to engage. I monitor and follow their social media."

"We also limit our time and the children know this. We use the screen time app to limit ours and the kids usage. We discuss gratitude and practice meditation. We discuss perception and how that relates to what people share on social media. My children are not allowed to play any multiplayer games."

"We do not allow our children to have an online presence but do include them if we make posts or pictures that feature them."

"My son does play interactive video games with his friends where they can speak to each other via headset, and the expectation is that you speak/treat/include people exactly as you would in real life. The same rules apply."

"For my 9th grader, I have access to her phone whenever I want. Cell phone does not go in the bedroom at night, it gets charged in the kitchen, this has always been the rule & will always be. We also talk extensively about only allowing people to follow you or friend you that you actually know. Not friends of friends, etc."

"There is a tech bedtime, no phone at all in car-it's where our best conversations happen."

"Only watch a youtube video with parent present. They have no access to internet on their own. Also no devices on school days only on the weekends. And only after chores and responsibilities have been met. It will not get in the way of God, family, and living life."

"We can observe their activity anytime we want. We "follow" them on Instagram. Don't post or say anything that would embarrass your family (through any family member's viewpoint)."

"Rules are: only post positive comments, ask friends permission prior to posting a pic, no inappropriate language, no starting group chats, no accepting requests from unknown names, account must be private, I must be on all 'private stories.'"

Another theme that came up from our questionnaire and focus group is parents concern about the development of their children's brains. Parents notice a difference with the ways that their children behave when technology is present and when technology is not present.

> "We talk about the way actions or websites can affect our children's brain development, and how to have good character in and offline."

> "We have openly discussed our feelings that children are not neurologically developed enough to emotionally handle social media."

> "I am a older parent and I don't use social media. It's frustrating to me because I feel I have no control blocking my child from it and I feel it's ruined his brain."

> "I try to explain to her that I am not against social media, I just dont think your brain is developed enough to be able to handle this kind of stuff… to be able to process it (Participant A)."

Summary

Through the questionnaire and focus group, it became clear to the researchers that parents are in-tune with the SEL competencies that their children need to navigate the world of technology. Parents expressed that their children need to understand what is acceptable to post and not post when using technology, which is an extension of building children's self-awareness and self-management so children understand the consequences of both positive and negative posts on social media.

Parents need to possess the SEL competencies in order to help their children use technology appropriately. The importance of modeling the appropriate use of technology is a theme that was repeated, which shows that parents are aware that their own actions affect how their children interact with technology.

Research Question #2:

What is the parent perception of the ways that elementary aged children use social-emotional

competencies on social media?

The most consistent theme that emerged from the research is that parents discussed the

importance of teaching their children to use social media as if it is an extension of how they

should act in person. The following responses from the questionnaire show the recurring theme

of using social media as if it is an extension of your real life.

> "Social media is an extension of how you should act if you were interacting in person or
> over a phone conversation. Same rules of compassion, empathy, and respect apply. Also
> that social media communication leaves a permanent record."

> "Everyday. Social-emotional skills used online are the same skills we use everyday in
> our physical lives with others. They encompass kindness, respect, integrity, truth, trust
> and loyalty. Screens do not lift the responsibilities you have as a human to another
> person. Every interaction you have with someone whether in-person, over Facetime,
> through texts or email or via social media is an important one deserving on your full
> attention, candor, and heart."

> "My son does play interactive video games with his friends where they can speak to each
> other via headset, and the expectation is that you speak/treat/include people exactly as
> you would in real life. The same rules apply."

Another theme that emerged from this study was students exercising the SEL competency

of self-awareness to get help or involve a parent if they came across something that made them

uncomfortable online. Parents reported instances of their children receiving or others requesting

nude photos through technology.

> "When he was in 7th grade, he wasn't even on Social Media yet, and a girl who like[d] him
> starting sending him "nudes". Thankfully, he told me, so we were able to talk about it. She
> eventually stopped. To this day, I think I should have told her parents, but I didn't. I should
> have."

> "Yes, we had a boy at a neighboring school request inappropriate pictures of our daughter in
> grade 7. We took it to the administration of both schools and dealt with it swiftly."

Summary

Parents instill the SEL competencies of self-awareness, self-management,

social-awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making by teaching their children

how to act both in person and online. A simple, but powerful rule that parents communicate to

their children is, "do not say anything online that you would not say in person." By

implementing this rule, parents are instilling the five SEL competencies in their children's online

presence. Parents are teaching their children that there will be social consequences if they say

something mean or disrespectful online. As children develop self-awareness, self-management,

social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making in person, their good

choices will hopefully transition into their online presence.

Research Question #3

What is the parent perception of the factors that can make social media challenging and or

beneficial for elementary aged children to navigate?

Parents reported social media having some benefits for children, including access to

information. When children have access to appropriate information online, they are able to learn

more about their interests and they are able to develop or improve a particular skill.

> "From a positive aspect, they are able to specifically target their interests and needs;
> accessing that information most efficiently. It also gives them a release and outlet to surf
> the web or YouTube and find things that interest them."

> "There is some positive as they have several learning websites they use as well as access
> to answers to their curious questions."

> "Helps with coding and learning new skills."

> "The one positive impact social media has had is that it allows my children the
> opportunity to learn about things that they're interested in in a audio-visual way. My first

55

grader when he wants to learn about something will YouTube it to learn about it and really becomes knowledgeable. I will say that it also has impacted their desire to be entrepreneurial."

Parents expressed that their children can communicate with friends and family who live far away, which helps build and maintain relationships. Children bulid their relationship skills by interacting with their friends online.

"Ongoing interaction with peers and camp friends around the globe."

"It allows them to connect in much the same way we did as kids - only more interactive with multiple friends simultaneously."

Although social media can be a valuable tool for connecting with friends and maintaining relationships, parents reported that too much time on social media results in their children isolating themselves from social situations.

"The negative includes lack of focus and isolation from everyday activity."

With the presence of social media, parents shared that their children feel left out of social situations. On social media, children want to post at a birthday party or other event, but then the children who were not invited feel excluded.

"Feeling excluded when friends get together and post pictures and they weren't invited but I think as adults we feel the same way sometimes."

The researchers found that screens in general tend to make kids more anxious. Multiple parents expressed that their children become addicted to technology. Many parents expressed the negative effects of addiction such as their children experiencing meltdowns and their children being grumpy when the devices are taken away.

"I feel the more time spent on devices, the worse her manners and in-person social skills become. The more time away from devices, there is an improvement again."

"If on gaming more than 2 hrs they become short tempered, headaches and aggressive."

"Negative—they go ape shit when I take it away."

"When we take it away and their not ready for us to its a complete meltdown. We have tried like giving warnings (in 5 minutes we will be taking your tablet away) but that doesn't help. But meltdowns tend to only last for like 5 minutes."

"Negatively. The more screen time they get the more they talk back to my husband and I and the more they argue with each other."

"Both children are not allowed to be on devices for a long period of time. We notice that when they watch TV or are on devices, it negatively impacts their ability to listen and self regulate their emotions."

"They always go through a Withdrawal. Especially if it is for a couple days. They have to actively be stimulated to not notice the withdrawal."

Participant C from our focus group shared another reason why her kids become anxious.

> One of the things that I didn't realize that they become anxious, I found this out from my youngest, was that if they were on social media… and then we take the social media away… the kids don't know, so from a girl perspective, someone will text you, your device has been taken away, you can't text them back and now that person is angry that they think you are not responding to them and that you are upset with them. And that was a huge lesson for us as grown ups that the kids were scared.. That (my friends) are going to think I am mad a them. I didn't understand. That is a whole piece to it that I never understood, when you just take the device away there is a ripple effect.

Another theme that emerged was children feeling a lack of self-esteem as a result of

social media. Parents perceived that the use of social media negatively impacted their children's

self-esteem because they became so obsessed with achieving "likes" on their pictures.

> "Initially, our grade 8 student had Instagram in grade 7. We quickly learned that our child was being depressed, feeling left out, and counting the numbers of "likes" on pictures. Her self-esteem was being affected and reliant on social media responses. We took it away until the middle of grade 8, but only after we felt she had grown enough emotionally to handle it."

> "My children seek peer approval and labor over deciding which picture is good enough to post. 7th grade child checks obsessively to see how many likes she gets."

"Negatively, honestly, when my son first got Snapchat and Insta, he was so obsessed with the Likes. We had to talk about it so much. For example, he would take down pics if they didn't get enough Likes. That was a big convo. People controlling how he felt about himself etc. Eventually, he stopped using Snapchat for a while bc he didn't like how it made him feel. He's now on but doesn't really post. I think that affects him negatively, too, though bc it's so much of their social world. He's a little out of the loop socially.

Participant A from our focus group shared about a recent conversation with her daughter

in regards to social media.

"My daughter is starting to deal with the anxiety behind not having social media because I don't allow her to have any, yet, and everybody at school… [is] saying like, why don't you have this, and you should have it, everybody has it… My daughter comes back and says everybody points out that I don't have it so it's like [hard] to fit in…
I try to explain to my daughter (in 6th grade), look at the kind of pictures that these girls are posting in 6th grade. They are trying to get attention and its not positive attention, it's not something that's going to feed their self worth. It's something that's going to ultimately turn into insecurities."

Summary

Children use social media both to their advantage and to their detriment. Some parents

reported that their children use social media to watch videos to learn how to create something of

their interest. Children also use the internet and social media to surf the web for research.

On the flip side, the majority of responses proved that children experience challenging

situations on social media. Parents reported their children become so obsessed with receiving

validation from peers in the form of "likes." This constant need of validation from others hurts

their children's self-esteem. Parents also reported their children having withdrawal from

technology when they were not using technology. The parent perception is that their children are

addicted to technology.

Chapter V
Conclusion

Introduction

Digital citizenship skills for children are crucial, however they do not infuse the SEL competencies from the offline lives of children into their online lives. By using the SEL competencies of self awareness, self management, responsible decision making, relationship skills, and social awareness, students can develop these SEL competencies into their digital lives. Steiner-Adair (2015) claims that there is a need for elementary aged children to use social-emotional learning (SEL) competencies on social media. The perception of the problem is that students lack the SEL competencies necessary to have a successful online experience. Students today are more active than ever on social media platforms (Twenge, 2017). Social media is a powerful tool and a great influencer on people. Research also shows that students have two identities, one on social media and the other in school (Steiner-Adair, 2015).

Summary and Discussion of Results

Research Question #1:

What is the parent perception of the relationship between social-emotional competencies and their influence on elementary-aged children to be good digital citizens?

The researchers concluded that most parents of elementary aged children understand the SEL competencies that their children need to navigate technology effectively. Parents help their children develop the SEL competencies through conversations and role playing. Parents expressed that their children need to understand what is acceptable to post and not post when

using technology. Building children's self-awareness and self-management allows children to understand the consequences of both positive and negative posts on social media.

The researchers found that parents need to possess the SEL competencies in order to help their children use technology appropriately. Parents need to be self-aware of their technology use. Modeling appropriate use of technology is a theme that was repeated through the data, which shows that parents are aware that their own actions affect how their children interact with technology.

TABLE 5.0: TIME PARTICIPANTS' CHILDREN SPEND ON TECHNOLOGY

How much time does your child spend on a digital device/smartphone each day?

Answered: 112   Skipped: 0
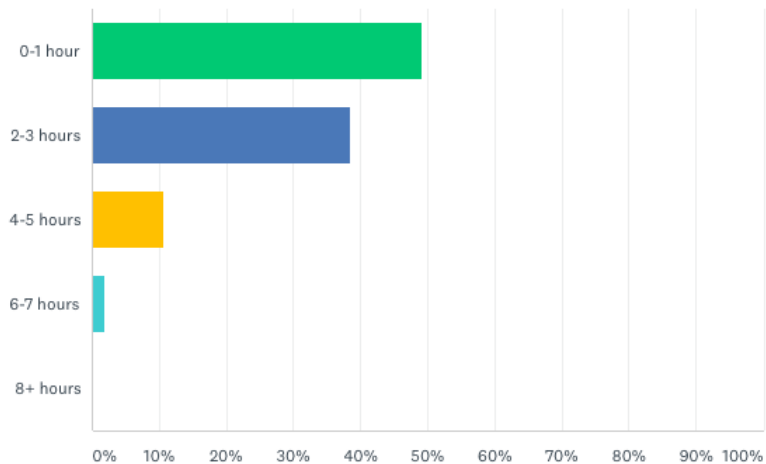
TABLE 5.1: TIME PARTICIPANTS SPEND ON TECHNOLOGY

How much time do you as the parent spend a digital device/smartphone (outside of work) each day?

Answered: 112   Skipped: 0
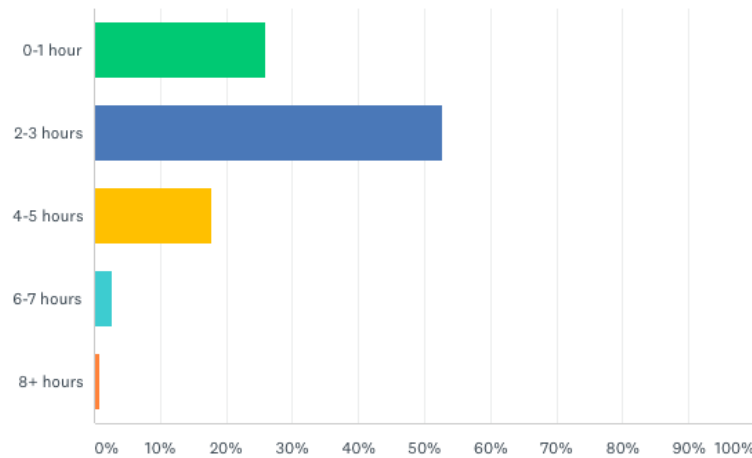
Although parents mentioned the importance of modeling technology to their children, the data revealed that parents are using technology more than their children. Close to 50% of parents reported their children using technology for less than one hour a day. Meanwhile, over 70% of parents reported their personal usage of technology, excluding work, to be over two hours per day.

Discussion

Parents expressed that they help their children develop digital citizenship skills through conversations. This is the first step in building self-awareness, which is an important competency that children need in order to have a successful online experience. According to Twenge (2017), students need to be self-aware of the content that they are posting online and understand how their actions online can affect others. By parents having conversations with their

children about the possible consequences of their actions online, children are able to reflect on their actions with the assistance of their parents. These conversations will give children the skills they need in order to make informed decisions online.

Parents also need to develop SEL competencies to help their children be successful digital citizens. Parents need to model the right behaviors online and need to demonstrate self-awareness, which includes putting their smartphones away. CASEL (2018) claims that SEL competencies are developed in children by educators, parents, and influential adults consistently modeling respect and positive behaviors that enable children to develop into caring adults. Therefore, parents modeling positive technological behaviors enable children to develop the SEL competencies they need to have a successful online experience.

Ribble (2008) outlines a method to implement digital citizenship successfully in the classroom that involves multiples stages. The third stage of the method is modeling and demonstration where teachers plan time with their students to model appropriate behavior on technology (Ribble, 2008). Parents can utilize this stage of the method at home to show their children how to make successful choices online.

The researchers found that parents reported using technology nearly twice as much as their children. Parents should be modeling appropriate behaviors for their children, which includes demonstrating the self-awareness to put down a piece of technology. Some parents reported utilizing apps for both themselves and their children that notifies the user of the amount of time spent using the technology. These apps help parents and children develop the self-awareness to know how much time they are spending on devices.

Research Question #2:

What is the parent perception of the ways that elementary aged children use social-emotional competencies on social media?

Parents instill the five SEL competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making by teaching their children how to act both in person and online. A simple, but powerful rule that parents communicate to their children is "do not say anything online that you would not say in person." By implementing this rule, parents are instilling the five SEL competencies in their children's online presence. Parents are teaching their children that there will be social consequences if they say something mean or disrespectful online. As children develop self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making in person, their good choices will transition into their online presence.

Discussion

Some parents expressed that they teach their children to treat their online life as an extension of their real life. This is simple, but profound. Since students tend to have two identities, one on social media and the other in school (Steiner-Adair, 2015), it is important for parents to establish digital rules that their children will follow. With this profound lesson taught, before a child clicks, they will think thoughtfully about the consequences of their clicks.

The researchers tagged the responses on the questionnaire using themes and then sorted the responses. The sample size is six participants for the theme of children to treat their online life as an extension as their real life. Although this sample size is small, the participants viewed social media more positively than the entire sample size. Half of the parents who teach their children that they should not do or say anything online that they would not say in person, viewed

social media positively. However, only 14% of the entire parent population views social media

positively.

TABLE 5.2: COMPARISON OF THEME (ONLINE AS AN EXTENSION OF REAL
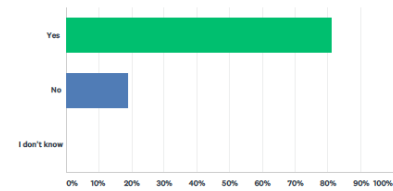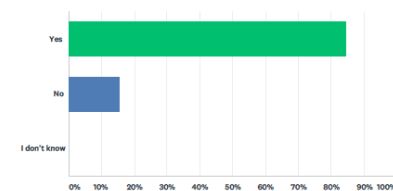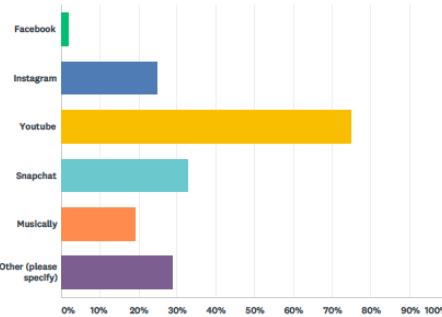
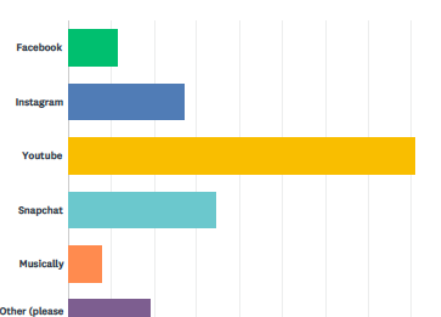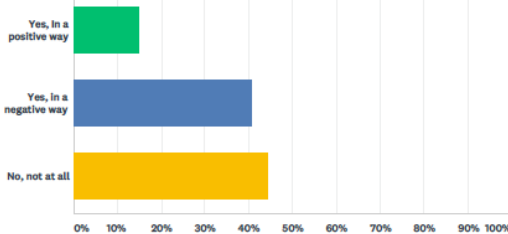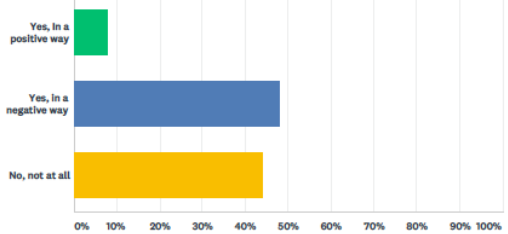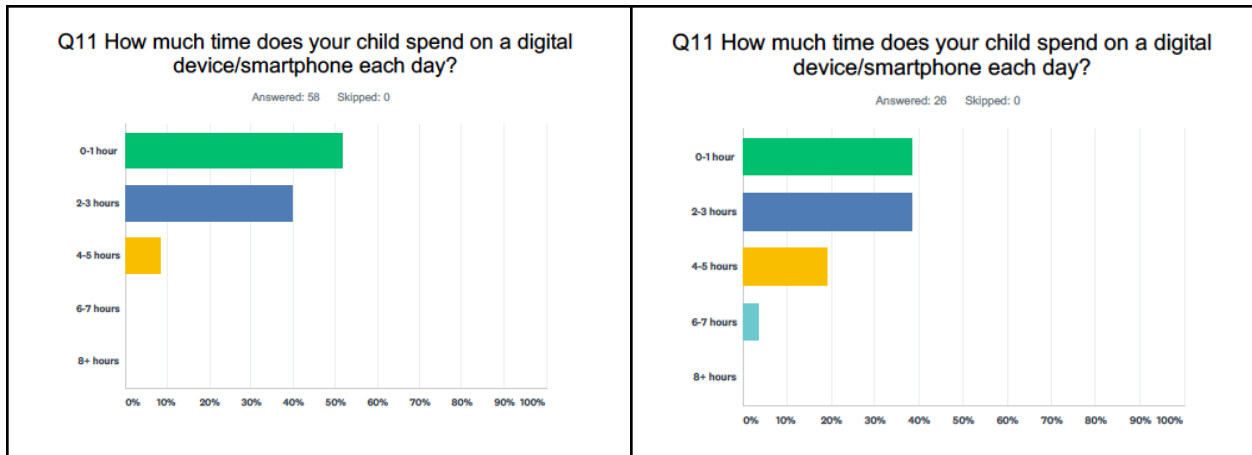LIFE) AND EFFECT OF SOCIAL MEDIA
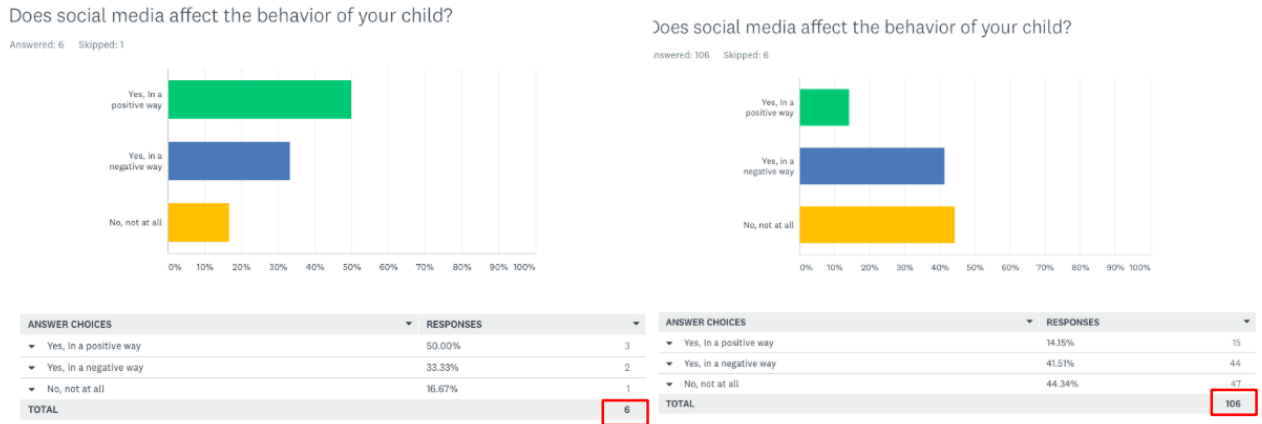
The filter for this theme did not stop there. Question 18, Have your children faced any

challenging situations on social media?, reveals that two children faced challenges on social

media. One child was removed from a private stories, which is most likely out of his or her

control. While the other child posted something they should not have posted. Of the parents

who enforce the rule of treating social media as if it is an extension of your offline life, only one

parent out of seven experiences a situation where their child made a poor choice before posting.

When analyzing the data, the researchers found that there was no significance between

the use of technology of children with SEL programs in their school and children without SEL

programs in their school. This is significant because research shows SEL programs to improve

student behavior and increase student academic achievement (Durlak et al., 2011; Hoffman,

2009). This research does not apply to online situations, which shows that students are utilizing

the SEL competencies in person, but they are not utilizing the SEL competencies online.

Below is a table comparing the data between SEL programs and no SEL programs in school. The researchers noticed that the graphs are similar.

TABLE 5.3: COMPARISON OF SEL PROGRAMS AND NO SEL PROGRAM

SEL Program	No SEL Program

The most important comparison is between the implementation of SEL programs and the use of social media. Question seven in the survey asked, "Does social media affect the behavior of your child?" The parent perception of the students who have an SEL program implemented in a school and the parent perception of the students who do not have an SEL program implemented in school are similar. The parent perception of social media affecting their children in a negative way who have an SEL program in their school is 40%, while the parent perception of social media affecting their children in a negative way who do not have an SEL program is 48%. The overwhelming majority of participants reported that social media is affecting their children in a negative manner, which shows that there is a disconnect between how students behave in person and how they behave online.

Research Question #3

What is the parent perception of the factors that can make social media challenging and or beneficial for elementary aged children to navigate?

Parents reported that their children use social media both to their advantage and to their detriment. Some parents discussed that their children use social media to watch video tutorials to learn how to create something of their interest. Children also use the internet and social media to surf the web to find out different areas of their interest.

The majority of responses from parents proved that children experience challenging situations on social media. Parents reported their children become so obsessed with receiving validation from peers in the form of "likes." This constant need of validation from others hurts their child's self-esteem. Parents also reported their children suffering from withdrawal when not using technology. The parent perception is that their children are addicted to technology.

Discussion

The data from the questionnaire and the focus group revealed that when students utilize the SEL competencies online, they will be more successful online. Social media has the potential to be a wonderful tool to connect people and to help people maintain relationships when the people may be physically far from each other. People value social media's ability to connect people together around the world with the push of a button (Williams, 2015). Parents expressed that their children can communicate with friends and family who live far away, which helps build and maintain relationships. Children are building their relationship skills through social media by interacting with their friends online. When used in moderation, social media is a powerful tool to develop SEL competencies in children.

Technology is addictive and children have to be self-aware to know how much time they are using technology. Too much time on technology will result in children isolating themselves from real-world social situations causing their social skills to decline from spending more time

on screens than face-to-face (Steiner-Adair, 2015). There are apps that push notifications to phones with the amount of time spent using technology. These apps are helpful for children to develop their self-awareness of how much time they are using technology. Once children are aware of the amount of technology they use, they can begin to manage their behavior and limit their usage on devices.

Lack of self-esteem is a theme that surfaced throughout the questionnaire and focus group. Parents continued to discuss how their children seek constant validation from their peers in the form of likes, which is a direct consequence of Facebook reengineering their platform in 2012 for the IPO (Newport, 2019). One parent mentioned that her middle school daughter's self-esteem became affected by the constant urge to receive likes. Fortunately, this parent was in-tune with her child's social-emotional development and took away social media from her daughter until she felt her daughter was mature enough to handle social media. This constant influx of social validation has only been around for eight years, which is why parents are asking for help.

After the focus group, participants approached the researchers to share that they thought they were in this social media fight alone. The parents felt at ease knowing that other parents are going through the same struggles with their children regarding social media. The parents also expressed interest in the development of a website that is updated frequently with resources for parents to help their children navigate social media.

Implications for Practice

As our study has shown, one must be intentional in teaching social-emotional competencies if one wants to see them at work in children's digital lives and it should begin at the elementary age level. Parents have a critical role to play in making sure their child develops these competences. Only time will tell how this disruptive force of technology will affect this generation as adults. As Twenge stated because of technology "our kids are on the verge of the biggest mental health crisis of modern history" (Twenge, 2017).

One of the most concerning results from our research was that many children today are addicted to technology. From the meltdowns to the agitation that take place when technology was taken away, one can see how dependent children are on technology. When one is focused on technology, they are less present in the physical world around them and they are not developing the social-emotional skills necessary to navigate successfully in this world. Parents having clear expectations and limitations with technology is crucial. Also, not allowing access to certain apps and forms of technology is suggested.

Many parents expressed the need for more support with how to help their children navigate their digital lives. Several parents admitted they did not understand how to use the technology their children were using and therefore did not monitor it. Parents supporting each other and sharing what they have learned can be very beneficial as parents can show their children how to use their social-emotional competencies in their digital lives.

Use of technology and social media has a direct correlation to increased anxiety. After reading so many responses about anxiety and other negative effects from technology and social media, the researchers couldn't help asking the question, "Why do parents continue to allow it?"

Children need parental support in order to have a successful experience with technology. The researchers heard repeatedly how children get themselves into trouble with technology due to lack of parental supervision or involvement.

There were several things that surprised the researchers in the course of this study. One of the biggest surprises was the prevalence of group chats in elementary students. Another surprise was the popularity of YouTube kids amongst the youngest of children as well as video games. The constant connection with children on their devices was another surprise to the researchers. Parents shared that their children had no break from their peers at school and that the challenges that took place in school transferred to the home and never had a break.

After analyzing the results, the researchers realized the following limitations. There was some confusion that parents had about understanding the definition of social-emotional learning. Also, some parents were surprised to learn that things like video games and YouTube were considered social media. Few parents claimed that their children did not use social media, but then explained that their children used YouTube kids, which is social media. Clearer definitions may have been helpful in their understanding. In addition, asking specific questions about video games would have given the researchers a glimpse into the social world of gaming.

Another limitation the researchers came across is the high percentage of children in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten. The researchers survey found that 54% of the participants were in kindergarten and below. This is important to note because many of the questions ask about technology and social media, which is why many of the responses claimed that social media is not yet an issue in their households merely because their children are young. Children in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten typically are only using YouTube kids to watch videos,

which does not give the researchers an accurate portrayal of the positive and negative effects of social media.

Another limitation was that the questionnaire asked parents to specify the grades that their children are in. However, parents have multiple children and when the researchers compared the grade levels to analyze the questions, the data registered for all of the grades that the parents selected.

Recommendations for Future Research

There are several recommendations the researchers have come up with as a result of this study. One potential study that could yield some interesting results would be to ask students to go without technology for three days. The SEL competencies of self awareness, self-management, social-awareness, responsible decision making, and relationship skills would potentially be strengthened as students realize their dependence on these devices. Surveys could be taken before and after the three day challenge by both parents and students. Some students may even choose to limit their usage after the challenge.

Another recommendation for future research would be to ask teachers what they see in the classroom in regards to students using social media. Teachers are with students everyday for multiple hours. If the school has an SEL program, the teacher is teaching the lessons and the SEL competencies. Teachers would offer a very unique perspective by seeing the children with their friends daily. It would also be interesting to ask teachers to identify the SEL program that is used in their school and see how that program affects the children's behavior both in school and online.

The importance and prevalence of the usage of video games amongst elementary aged children was a category that was underestimated by the researchers prior to the start of the study. Video games have become more connected with social media than ever before. Children are able to communicate with one another and chat through messages in the games. This is another factor of social media that deserves further research.

Another opportunity for future research would be to compare the amount of time parents are on their devices with how much their children are on theirs. This would be significant because the researchers found that parents are using technology for longer periods of time than their children. Asking parents about the SEL competencies that they use on social media would also be interesting to investigate further as the researchers found modeling to be an important component in helping students apply their SEL competencies in their digital lives.

Summary

Themes revolving around a sense of belonging continued to surface throughout the research. Many parents mentioned that social media is a wonderful tool, when used appropriately, to connect their children to their friends and family around the world. The ability to develop relationships with the click of a button is an amazing technological feature. Children develop the SEL competency of social awareness and relationship skills by nurturing their friendships via text, call or video chat. The ability to connect with a click of a button is contributing to the children's sense of belonging.

The version of social media today is built on others seeking social validation through retweets, likes, and comments. By seeking social approval, children are constantly connected to

their peers. Children face a social pressure to respond right away on their group chats or social media accounts. With the constant notifications, children do not have time to clear their head and reflect on their day. Children are constantly connected to their peers, which is causing children anxiety.

This approval seeking mentality negatively affects children's self esteem. Parents mentioned their children counting the likes and even taking pictures down if they did not receive enough likes. Children become upset when others posted a picture from a party and their child was not invited. Children are seeking the social validation from others online so they feel accepted. "Belonging is essential. We must belong to something, to someone, to somewhere" (Brown, 2018).

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: FLYER

Study Participants Needed For Online Survey

Who: Parents of elementary aged children (K-5) or parents who have had elementary aged children in the past 5 years. Participants who live in the United States.

What: Responding to a 15 minute online 18 question survey regarding children's use of social media and the effect of social media on their behavior.

Title: Developing Digital Citizens Using Social-Emotional Competencies

How to access the study:
1. Copy to following SurveyMonkey™ web address in the internet search bar: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2PXN68K
2. At the end of the Informed Consent page, you see a button entitled "OK". By clicking "OK", you are agreeing to participate in the survey. Researcher's contact information: APanella@email.lynn.edu, MQuinn@email.lynn.edu, NKline@lynn.edu

Participants can contact the researchers after completion of the questionnaire to participate in a follow up interview if desired.

APPENDIX B: Informed Consent

*1. INFORMED CONSENT
The purpose of this study is to research how social media affects elementary aged children (K-5) and how to best develop students to be digital citizens using social-emotional practices.

Specific Procedures
Your participation in this study will assist in learning about the online habits of children/students, and how social media affects their behavior. You will be asked to answer 18 questions about your opinions on your child's social media habits.

Duration of Participation and Compensation
The total duration of your participation should be no longer than 15 minutes. There will be no compensation for participation.

Risks
This online questionnaire is strictly voluntary, and no penalty will be imposed for non-participation. There are minimal risks in participating in the questionnaire. However, if you feel uncomfortable or anxious at any time, you may press the "X" button in the upper right-hand corner of the questionnaire and exit out of the questionnaire.

Benefits
There are no benefits for answering the questionnaire, however parents and educators may enjoy sharing their knowledge and experience in order to contribute to the research about impact of social media on elementary aged children.

Confidentiality
This questionnaire is strictly anonymous and there is no identifying information. No IP addresses will be kept or known to the researchers. Your answers to questions will be stored for two years on a password protected computer and after that time will be deleted. This project's research records may be reviewed by the departments at Lynn University responsible for regulatory and research oversight.

Documentation of Informed Consent
I have had an opportunity to read the consent form and have the research study explained. I have had an opportunity to ask questions about the research project and my questions have been answered. I am prepared to participate in the research study described above.

By clicking "OK" I am consenting to participate in the study.
- OK, you have my permission

APPENDIX C: Questionnaire

1. Select the region of the United States that you live in
Northeast, Midwest, Mid-Atlantic, South, Southwest, West

2. My child(ren) are in grades (click all that apply):
PreK and younger
K
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12+

3. Does your child have access to social media (Social Media can be classified into six different types of categories:
(1) collaborative projects (e.g., Wikipedia);
(2) blogs or microblogs;
(3) content communities (e.g.,YouTube);
(4) social networking (LinkedIn, Facebook);
(5) virtual game-worlds; and
(6) virtual social-worlds (e.g., Second Life)" (Kaplan, A., & Haenlein, M., 2010).
  ● Yes
  ● No
  ● I don't know

4. What social media sites do your children use? (Select all that apply)
        Facebook
        Instagram
        YouTube
        SnapChat
        Musically

5. Is there a Social-emotional learning program implemented at your child's school? (Social-emotional Learning - The process whereby children and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage their emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (Bradberry, & Greaves, 2009).

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

6. What type of school does your student attend?

- Private (independent)
- Religious
- Public
- Charter
- Other

7. Does social media affect the behavior of your child?

- Yes in a positive way
- Yes in a negative way
- No, not at all

8. What grade did your child first get access social media?
PreK
K
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12+

9. My child pressured me into buying them a smartphone, iPad, computer or other device that accesses the internet before I felt they were ready

No, not at all	Very Little	Some Influence	Quite a Bit	Yes, very much
1	2	3	4	5

10. My child pressured me to let them download social media apps that I felt were not appropriate

No, not at all	Very Little	Some Influence	Quite a Bit	Yes, very much
1	2	3	4	5

11. How much time does your child spend on a digital device/smartphone each day?

0-1 hour	2-3 hours	4-5 hours	6-7 hours	8+ hours

12. How much time do you as the parent spend a digital device/smartphone (outside of work) each day?

0-1 hour	2-3 hours	4-5 hours	6-7 hours	8+ hours

Open-ended questions. Please feel free to write as much as you want.

13. Have your children faced any challenging situations on social media? Explain.

14. How does your child's digital life affect their behavior? (Positive or negative)

15. How do you as a family teach social-emotional skills online?
(Social-emotional learning - The process whereby children and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage their emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (Bradberry, & Greaves, 2009).

16. What are the rules in your household regarding social media?

17. How do you help your child develop appropriate digital citizenship skills that they can exercise on social media? (Digital citizenship teaches children to use technology appropriately and enjoy its capabilities to become more productive)

18. As a parent, what would be helpful to help your child navigate social media?

Message after survey is completed:

If you are interested in participating in a focus group on this topic, we would love to hear from you! Please email MQuinn@email.lynn.edu or APanella@email.lynn.edu for further information.

Thank you!

APPENDIX D: Informed Consent Focus Group

*1. INFORMED CONSENT
The purpose of this study is to research how social media affects elementary aged children (K-5) and how to best develop students to be digital citizens using social-emotional practices.

Specific Procedures
Your participation in this study will assist in learning about the online habits of children/students, and how social media affects their behavior. You will be asked to answer questions about your opinions on your child's social media habits.

Duration of Participation and Compensation
The total duration of your participation should be no longer than 45 minutes. There will be no compensation for participation.

Risks
This interview is strictly voluntary, and no penalty will be imposed for non-participation. There are minimal risks in participating in the interview. However, if you feel uncomfortable, you may ask the researchers to stop audio recording during the focus group. All data will be destroyed and shredded.

Benefits
There are no benefits for participating in the focus group, however parents and educators may enjoy sharing their knowledge and experience in order to contribute to the research about impact of social media on elementary aged children.

Confidentiality
This focus group is strictly confidential and there is no identifying information. Pseudonyms will be given to the participants so no names will be identified. Your answers to questions will be stored for two years on a password protected computer and after that time will be deleted. This project's research records may be reviewed by the departments at Lynn University responsible for regulatory and research oversight.

Documentation of Informed Consent
I have had an opportunity to read the consent form and have the research study explained. I have had an opportunity to ask questions about the research project and my questions have been answered. I am prepared to participate in the research study described above.

By signing this document, I am consenting to participate in the study.

_____   _____

Participant's name   Date
_____

Participant's signature