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The Impact of Parental Digital Literacy on Children's Well-being: Mediating Role of Emotional Intelligence in Kinondoni Municipality, Tanzania

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Abstract: *Parental digital literacy in the information age has also emerged as an essential aspect of children's well-being, with psychological, social, and emotional implications for their development. This study examines the effects of children's well-being by parental digital literacy, with emotional intelligence (EI) as a mediator, in Kinondoni Municipality, Tanzania. Informed by Human Capital Theory, Emotional Intelligence Theory, and Digital Literacy frameworks, the research used a cross-sectional survey design with a multistage sample of primary school children's parents. Data were gathered from 364 respondents using structured questionnaires and statistically examined using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling for purposes of evaluating reliability, validity, and hypothesized relationships. Results show parental digital literacy to have a highly significant impact on children's well-being and children's Emotional Intelligence in a positive way. Emotional intelligence, however, is a highly significant predictor of child well-being and also mediates the association between parental digital literacy and well-being. They suggest that technologically sophisticated parents not only create secure and nurturing online environments but also create socio-emotional competencies for integrative child development. The study extends Human Capital Theory to digital parenting and implies applicability and policy implications, such as parent-focused digital literacy education and emotional intelligence development in school and family support programs. Linking digital competencies with socio-emotional progress is required in order to enhance children's wellbeing in today's digitalised life.*

Keywords: Parental digital literacy, digital literacy, emotional intelligence, children's well-being, Tanzania

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's digital age, the deepening integration of technology into everyday life has changed the ways families engage with one another, how children learn, and how children's development takes shape. Parental digital literacy, which is defined as the ability of a parent to sufficiently understand, evaluate, and use digital tools, has become an important factor in not only children's digital experiences but also their health and well-being (Hargittai , 2002; Tomczyk & Potyrała, 2021). All over the world, the increasing use of digital media in children's lives poses both opportunities and risks for children's cognitive, emotional, and social development (Syukur et al., 2024; Vissenberg et al., 2022). In this changing context, there is an increase of interest to explore how parental digital literacy impacts children's abilities to engage with the digital environment in safe and purposeful ways in relation to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for instance SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) and SDG 4 (Quality Education).

The digital literacy of parents may not be merely a technical skill; it is also an integral form of human capital that shapes children's skill development and socio-emotional development. Human capital theory (Becker, 1994; Schultz, 1961) argues that parental investments in education and knowledge lead to economic benefits over the long run that enhance children's cognitive and emotional resources. Parents may curate the online experiences of children, however, their digital skills decide the potential for exposure to information, social interactions, and learning experiences (Livingstone & Helsper, 2008; Kumpulainen et al., 2020). Disparities in parental digital competence often mirror larger societal economic inequalities creating a "digital divide", which has the potential to diminish children's emotional and psychological wellbeing (Colom, 2020; Purnama et al., 2022). Rapid digitalization in Tanzania has changed communication, learning, and family life, but there are still inequities in parental digital literacy, especially in urban municipalities such as Kinondoni. Although internet access has increased in these areas, many parents lack the skills to regulate their children's online computer use. This leads to challenges such as digital addiction, cyberbullying, and disconnection from social norms of engagement (Maulida et al., 2025; Tinmaz et al., 2023). This is becoming a greater concern for children's emotional and psychological health, particularly when emotional development is often overshadowed by academic performance. Additionally, there is no structured parental guidance framework on these issues and insufficient use of digital literacy in community programs.

Theoretically, this study was established through Human Capital Theory because parental investments, in the form of knowledge and skill, such as digital literacy, can improve children's capabilities and/or outcomes (Cunha & Heckman, 2007; Heckman, 2006). However, while there is a growing recognition about the significance of digital literacy, current policy directives in Tanzania, result in shortfalls for the emotional dimensions of children's digital well-being. Previous research concentrated exclusively on either children's educational outcomes or children's safety online, and some, albeit few, studies have addressed emotional intelligence as a mediator between a parent's digital literacy and their child's well-being (Saleha et al., 2022; Sabrina & Ratnasari, 2025). This gap in research indicates the need for empirical studies related to these variables of interest in a local sociocultural and economic context, such as Kinondoni Municipality.

Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the mediating role of emotional intelligence on the relationship between parental digital literacy and children's well-being in Kinondoni Municipality, Tanzania. Addressing this issue is important for both SDG 3 and SDG 4, and for creating and including a digitally competent and emotionally resilient generation. On the local level, findings will further inform policymakers, services, educators and parents on how to promote digital parenting practices and emotional education within the family structure. Failure to address these gaps can result in the cycles of intergenerational digital inequality, child emotional distress, and loss of developmental potential, threatening social and economic progress on national and global levels.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Theoretical Review

This study is supported by and large by Human Capital Theory, the theory of Emotional Intelligence (EI), and Digital Literacy theories, which provide a broad framework leading to the parent's skills affecting their child's outcome through different media. It should be noted that Human Capital Theory has its roots in the ancient times, it was show by (Schultz, 1961) and lately, by the works of Becker (1994), it is stressing that investments in individuals' knowledge and skills which are going to enhance their level of productivity and socio-economic well-being. Here, Parental Digital Literacy is seen as a kind of human capital which the parents are investing in, and that can directly or indirectly affect the child's development and well-being (Becker, 1994; Schultz, 1961). The role of the primary caregiver, the child's parent, in teaching, coaching, and supporting the child in developing and sustaining mental health has been explained by the Social Studies theory developed by Maanen (2007). As the studies of Cunha and Heckman (2007) and Heckman (2006) suggest that early learning of skills has long-term payoffs and aligns with the theory of parental digital literacy, Emotional Intelligence theory by Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (2004) explains how the ability to identify, comprehend, and manage emotions is the key to mental well-being. It is interesting that this theory states that the child's overall well-being can be boosted through the interplay between the child's emotional intelligence and the digital literacy of the parents. Concurrently, parents' Digital Literacy acts as the child's connection to the world, and children, through the help of their parents, are able to successfully navigate the Internet and be safe; thus, the different Digital Literacy concepts (Hargittai, 2002; Livingstone & Helsper, 2008) open a new way of arguing for parental mediation in children's digital worlds.

The preference for these theories in lieu of other characteristics lies in their collective orientation toward skill development (Human Capital Theory), emotional skill (EI theory), and actual digital interaction (Digital Literacy theories); thus they deliver a great understanding of the child's well-being under the digital context. The same encompassing concept has been adopted by authors who have integrated these theories in their studies-for instance, Syukur et al. (2024) and Vissenberg et al. (2022) have explored the impact of digital literacy on family well-being and youth resilience, whereas Llamas-Díaz et al. (2022) and Sánchez-Núñez et al. (2020) have promoted emotional intelligence as a well-being determinant. The variables in this research, parental digital literacy (independent variable), children's emotional intelligence (mediator), and children's well-being (dependent variable), have their roots in these theoretical domains. Among Human Capital Theory it should also be mentioned that a strong side is the range of empirical data that fully supports the importance of skill upgrades for long-term benefits (Becker, 1994), even though it might be said that it tends to neglect social and emotional factors. The biggest positive of the Emotional Intelligence theory is its ability to explain the mechanisms behind the emotional processes that lead to happiness, but it has been constantly haunted by the existence of measurement issues (Petrides & Furnham, 2003). Digital Literacy theories excellently correlate the liking of technology with the technological skills today but the issue of socio-economic hindrances might be missing in their implication (Colom, 2020). In the big picture, it is especially effective to merge these theories in this study since it will cover two routes, both the cognitive and emotional pathways respectively, of how parental digital literacy will influence children's well-being in a sociocultural relevant context such as Kinondoni Municipality.

2.2 Parental Digital Literacy and Children's Well-being

Parental digital literacy, is defined as the sum of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of the parents that allow them to properly and effectively use the technology, to evaluate its worth and advantages, and to help and guide their children through the online world and the internet (Utami et al., 2022; Barnes & Potter, 2021). Children's well-being is a complex phenomenon with many aspects, such as the mental, emotional, and social health of the child, that are strongly linked to the upbringing of the family, the role of the parents, and the socio-cultural situations (Llamas-Díaz et al., 2022). Research shows that the presence of digitally skilled parents at home gives the children the opportunity to put at risk and benefits under control better performing in the area of social-emotional outcomes (Vissenberg et al., 2022; Purnama et al., 2022). A case in point, the study by Tomczyk and Potyrała (2021) indicates that beginning from the parents with good digital knowledge, there is a stronger likelihood of these parents employing more effective strategies for preventing children's harmful online behaviors. Based on human capital theory (Becker, 1994; Schultz, 1961), the results of this study demonstrate that investing in parental digital literacy can promote the well-being of children over the long term.

In different places, recent research that used statistically based methods found that there is a connection between the digital literacy of the parents and the well-being of their children, although there were differences in the way researchers went about this. Syukur and her team (2024), for instance, performed a survey involving people from different countries and used structured questionnaires along with stratified random sampling to examine parents' use of digital technology. What they found was that parents who were good at handling digital tools had kids with fewer behavioral problems and a healthier family life. In a study carried out in Indonesia, Supriyadi and Maesyaroh (2023) utilized path analysis to dig out the fact that the children's social-emotional development was highly predicted by the parental digital literacy of course, and at the same time, this effect was largely mediated by the supportive parenting route. On the other hand, Bohnert and Gracia (2021) looked at the Irish society along with planning of a long-term study and found that the parents can limit the negative effects of screen time on the child's mental health by using digital media. Nevertheless, the comparison comes out as an inconsistent set through the study of the likes of Nabi and Wolfers (2022) as they argue that high digital media exposure, even with the presence of the guardians, is a loss to the development of children's emotional intelligence and hence revealing disparity in the research.

The research has grown in support, though several themes in relation to the localized situation have not been explored; particularly in low- and middle-income countries like Tanzania, where the socio-economic and cultural attributes are important in their way of being online and their parenting styles. The other part of the world, rich in studies on this very topic, yet taking into consideration very local conditions has so far been quite limited. (Treviño et al., 2021) Even more so, the determination of the well-being of children varied among studies–some depended on different self-reports, while others employed validated emotional intelligence scales (Mayer et al., 2004; Petrides & Furnham, 2003). This makes the interpretations inconsistent and the range of comparability narrow. Only some studies that use these combined socio-cultural and PLS-SEM robust techniques as proposed in this study, are based in some explicitly socio-cultural integration tools, though in limited ways. By taking care of these gaps, the intention of the present research is to site the parental digital literacy influence on children's well-being in a city of African setting and to extend the applicability of the existing general models by means.

Hypothesis (H1): Higher levels of parental digital literacy are positively associated with children's well-being in Kinondoni Municipality.

2.3 Parental Digital Literacy and Emotional Intelligence

The term parental digital literacy denotes the capabilities of the parents to employ digital technologies in interactions that are beneficial for the learning, protection, and overall welfare of the children in the digital realm to the maximum possible degree. At the same time, emotional intelligence (EI) is quite a complex term to define, it means the capability to feel, comprehend, control, and manage one's and others' emotions, thus, the impact is only positive on the interpersonal relationships and on the person's mental health state (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2002; Mayer et al., 2004; Petrides & Furnham, 2003). The recent scientific literature has been presenting the dual nature of these two constructs, although this time with increased focus on the role of parents and the development of the child. One particular study among others was done by Supriyadi and Maesyaroh (2023) who demonstrated that the higher the level of parental digital literacy the higher the level of direct help their children are getting, and this is most prominent in the case of social-emotional development with the first step being the acquisition of emotional intelligence. The study of Purnama et al. (2022) went on to say that mediates is the word that characterizes the role of digital literacy in the process between parental style and children's behavior, which might end up leading to the children's EI progress.

Furthermore, the theoretical relationship connecting parental digital literacy and child EI is backed by actual evidence, and this takes the form of Human Capital and Skill Formation and Technology (Becker, 1994; Schultz, 1961; Cunha & Heckman, 2007). It was proven by Nabi and Wolfers (2022) that a high awareness of digital media risks in parents could stopped the potential negative effects on the emotional capacities of children; on the contrary, the study by Saleha et al. (2022) was an instance of the positive effect of early childhood setting digital literacy interventions on social-emotional competencies of children. There are a whole lot of uses of the quantitative survey designs, purposive or stratified sampling, and multiple regression or structural equation modeling as the Analytical skills use of these types of designs are well suited to and closely related to the research scenario. Nevertheless, until now, the majority of the studies had been carried out in the affluent and middle-income countries which were not suitable for the poor conditions of the African countries like Tanzania. This gap demands that the research be centered regarding the digital literacy of parents-children EI relationship, mainly in Dar es Salaam.

The findings of Ignatova (2023) are supported by the other researchers, although there are significant gaps in the study that need clarification including the mechanisms through which this influence operates. This is especially the case in low-income and urban Africa, where there are big differences in parenting norms and the access to technology. In the article by the Ignatova (2023), dual use of digital technology for increasing the emotional intelligence of the children was noted, and parents played a crucial role in this process. Moreover, Audrin and Audrin (2023) in their digital domains evaluated that the people who are good at "emotional intelligence" are going to have a hard time to capture digital emotion regulation. Also noted were the claims of Li and Guo (2023) that besides screen time, it is the quality of parent-child digital interactions that leads to positive socio-emotional development. These kinds of interactions have not been analyzed at all in Tanzania, where the uptake of digital technologies is uneven among households. The lack of understanding of the child's emotional intelligence in relation to parental digital literacy needs to be mitigated by filling the knowledge gap.Therefore, the overarching hypothesis guiding this study is:

Hypothesis (H2): Parental digital literacy positively influences children's emotional intelligence in the context of Kinondoni Municipality.

2.4 Emotional Intelligence and Children's Well-being

The term "emotional intelligence" (EI) refers to the ability to recognize, comprehend, manage, and use feelings in a positive way whether it is one's own feelings or those of others in the interaction (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2004). The emotional, psychological, and social health of children is a concept of the well-being and, as such, it informs the child's quality of life and functionality. Currently, available data from studies support the view that EI is the most significant forecaster of the children's well-being. It also comes out as the highlight in the studies that EI plays strong roles in emotional regulation, resilience, and congenial social relationships (Llamas-Díaz et al., 2022; Salavera et al., 2020). The majority of the research uses validated quantitative instruments like the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire and well-being scales and is carried out through cross-sectional and longitudinal designs with children or adolescent samples (Méndez Giménez, Cecchini Estrada, & García Romero, 2020). Such studies, by way of data collection and use of statistical tools are similar to the methodology of the present work which uses quantitative means and a representative sample to ascertain how EI is related to children's well-being in the city of Dar es Salaam.

There has been a lot of study done in different fields on this and it has been found that there is a direct relationship between emotional intelligence and the well-being of children. Some of the most common well-being outcomes have been life satisfaction, academic success, mental health, and others (Shengyao et al., 2024 & Fu et al., 2021). It has been proven by the longitudinal studies that the kids with more Emotional Intelligence can handle their minds in the most difficult situations, and the African-context studies have very limited data but they have the same developmental trajectories and so call for more community-specific research due to socio-cultural variations (Sánchez-Núñez et al., 2020). It is very rare to find research work that is concentrated in the urban all exhausted and very population and where in such conditions, unique social, economic, and digital factors could affect the EI-well-being relationship. By setting the study in Dar es Salaam, large numbers of samples have been used with advanced statistical analysis, i.e., the use of structural equation modeling (SEM) to furnish stronger evidence hence filling the knowledge gap. Efforts need to be made in recognizing digital literacy as a contextual factor because the escalation in digital exposure has a significant effect on children's emotional and social development.

The measurement of emotional intelligence in children is frequently a combination of two methods: one based on the natural abilities and the one based on the traits measured through self-reports, hence making a tradeoff between the reliability of the test and the ease with which it can be conducted (Petrides & Furnham, 2003). The well-being assessments when administered would cover the emotional, social, and psychological domains and concurrently be able to paint a broader and more detailed picture of the child's way of life (Salavera et al., 2020). Despite a great deal of debate, the EI-(well) being relationship is clearly established; yet, it has been found somewhat challenging to replicate the results internationally part due to the small sample sizes, dated research methods such as the one-time survey approaches, and the absence of the African setting from the/picture; three factors at last guaranteeing/forcing some discretion to any research or even the apparent general truth of its conclusions (Llamas-Díaz et al., 2022). This investigation aims at partly rectifying the situation by putting to use the huge population and the varied human samples of Dar es Salaam and by employing the longitudinal quantitative methods, as well as looking into the possibly equalizing binary character of digital literacy in the EI–well-being connection. A complete disparity can be noted in the literature concerning the role of digital technology in the development of emotion regulation skills in children. Thus, this study with its very specific location context, through uniquely contributing to the understanding of how emotional intelligence in support of children's well-being in the modern urban Tanzania.

Hypothesis (H3): Emotional intelligence positively influences children's well-being in Kinondoni Municipality.

2.5 Parental Digital Literacy, Emotional Intelligence and Children's Well-being

Becoming skilled in the use of digital tools and children's digital engagement and learning also parents' digital literacy that is the meaning of the term (Livingstone & Helsper, 2008; Hargittai, 2002). Emotional intelligence (EI) that is the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's and others' emotions is one of the major factors in the emotional and social development of children (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2004). The well-being of a child with respect to the internal emotions and social aspects reflects the person's quality of life (Llamas-Díaz et al., 2022). The second-to-last co-question in the design, formulated just like the very first of its kind except it was not so overtly addressed to parents but to children, was "Do you have anything else to add?" Similar methodological approaches are justified according to these frameworks, which again draw attention to the importance of looking at EI as a mediator toward understanding how digital parenting actually impacts child outcomes.

For the direct and indirect effects of parents' digital literacy on children's health to continue, empirical research has yielded a lot of evidence. One of the indirect effects is their emotional intelligence growth (Syukur et al., 2024; Barnes & Potter, 2021). For instance, a study by Purnama et al. (2022) discovered that digital literacy is a mediator of parenting and children's behavioral adjustment, thus implying that parents with advanced-level digital competencies can foster emotional intelligences in children that will lead to healthier development. But, by some research, the aforementioned effects are not universal, but rather dependent on the economic and social situation, especially in poorer or developing countries, where availability of digital resources and culture may affect the intensity of mediation (Tomczyk & Potyrała, 2021; Maulida et al., 2025). In most cases, parental digital literacy and trait EI are rated using self-report questionnaires, and children's wellbeing is measured using multidimensional emotional and social health indicators (Mayer et al., 2004; Petrides & Furnham, 2003).In spite of sufficient sample sizes, there is a lack in the generalizability of these findings within urban East African environments such as Dar es Salaam, which demands investigation of EI mediating effects in this particular socio-cultural and digital environment.

Numerous studies have indicated emotional intelligence (EI) is propitious for promoting children's psychosocial well-being, social competence, and resilience of EI as an important mediator to developmental outcomes (Llamas-Díaz et al., 2022; Salavera et al., 2020). Mediated analysis based quantitative pedagogical studies show children that have a showed higher EI experience higher mental health and satisfaction with life, and that parental support; in that; parental digital literacies is tacit to help fortify the development of emotional skills when the digital experience is provided as a safe, and emotionally supportive practice (Escarlos & Santillan, 2023; Vissenberg et al., 2022). While discussed in a few, there is also a consideration of mediated effects within developmental age, and cultural contexts, suggesting either younger children are not supported to the same extent to emotionality, or do not fully develop around EI to intervention, without parental EI and digital literacy (Nabi & Wolfers, 2022; Bohnert & Gracia, 2021). In sum, there is a body of empirical research to still be cognizant of the need for research directed towards increased knowledge and awareness of child well-being, and while discussing parenting, their digital experiences and EI, effects in the Dar es Salaam digital family context. As such, this proposed study will seek to investigate the potential role EI.

Hypothesis (H4): Emotional intelligence mediates the relationship between parental digital literacy and children's well-being in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

2.6 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1: Demonstrate the Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for the study "Parental Digital Literacy and Children's Well-being: Mediating Role of Emotional Intelligence in Kinondoni Municipality, Tanzania" depicts the relationships that are hypothesized among the following key variables. At the center of the framework is parental digital literacy as the independent variable, which refers to parents' capabilities to effectively use, understand, and manage digital technologies, which is of great significance in our current digitally oriented world. Parental digital literacy impacts children's well-being as the dependent variable, which refers to children's physical, emotional, psychological, and social health. The framework assumes that children's emotional intelligence (the capacity to appraise, regulate, and use emotions in adaptive ways), is an intervening variable mediating the relationship that parental digital literacy has with children's positive health and well-being outcomes. An extension of the framework postulates that parental digital literacy has direct effects on children's emotional intelligence, since parents who are digitally literate may be better equipped to guide, monitor, and mediate their children's emotional and social development more effectively. Thus, this overall model represents the interaction between technological capabilities, emotional competencies, and well-being in the context of the socio-cultural setting of Kinondoni Municipality, and serves as an organized framework for empirical research.

3. Methods

The research site for this study was the municipality of Kinondoni, recognized as one of five municipalities in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Kinondoni is a densely urbanized area that has been recognized as a growing area for digital infrastructure; the area's socioeconomic status is also heterogeneous; it is also recognized for the growing accessibility of internet connectivity. All of these locational factors provide a context that can be conducive for studying parental digital literacy and children's digital experiences. (Mtega & Msungu, 2013; Pew Research Center, 2019).

Researchers utilized a cross-sectional survey design with a correlational approach in regard to data collection procedures. They used a cross-sectional approach in order to collect multiple datasets simultaneously of parental digital literacy, emotional intelligence, and children's well-being, but also to test hypothesized mediation relationships on parental digital literacy and children's well-being in an efficient and low cost manner (Sedgwick, 2014),. The researchers considered a correlational approach to be appropriate for studying relationships among psychological and social variables, without experimental manipulation, in natural contexts (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The target population was composed of parents with children enrolled in primary schools in Kinondoni Municipality. To obtain the sample we used a multi-stage sampling procedure, specifically stratifying schools into public and private, selecting four schools (Boko primary school, Mtongani primary school, Kelandi primary school and Kwanza primary) randomly, and then selecting parents systematically from the official school register of each selected school. We determined that a minimum sample size of 364 parents was required using PLS-SEM power analysis to provide adequate power in mediation analysis (Kock & Hadaya, 2018). A structured questionnaire was the main data collection tool, which was administered to the participants in Kiswahili. Parental Digital Literacy was measured with eight items, which we adapted from Eshet-Alkalai (2004) and Ng (2012), covering digital communication skills, information evaluation, and underlying concepts of online safety. We used eight items from the KIDSCREEN-27 (Ravens-Sieberer et al., 2007) Framework to measure Children's Well-Being. We measured Emotional Intelligence with eight items adapted from the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (Schutte et al., 1998). All items were scored on a 5-point Likert scale ("1" = strongly disagree to "5" = strongly agree). The items in the questionnaire were pre-tested for context and reliability before data collection.

Using SmartPLS, data collected from the surveys was analyzed with Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), an appropriate method for prediction-based studies, complex mediation frameworks, and studies with smaller sample sizes (Hair et al., 2021; Sarstedt et al., 2020). The analysis occurred in two steps. First, the measurement model was evaluated for its reliability (via Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability) and validity (convergent and discriminant validity; AVE and HTMT). Second, the structural model assessed the hypothesized mediation of emotional intelligence, between parental digital literacy and child well-being. Bootstrapping analysis with 5,000 resamples was performed to test the direct and indirect effects' significance of the impact of emotional intelligence, which allows for a strong inference of the mediation effect (Zhao et al., 2010). This methodological approach provided a rigorous evaluation of emotional intelligence's mediating effect for the data while considering common non-normality present with survey data in social science quantitatively.

4. Findings

4.1 Assessment of Measurement Model

Measurement model was assessed for testing the study constructs' validity and reliability. Table 1 and Figure 2 , depicts factor loadings, Cronbach's alpha (α), composite reliability (CR), rho_A, and average variance extracted (AVE). All the constructs indicated desirable levels of internal consistency with Cronbach's α, rho_A, and CR all equal to or greater than 0.70 (Hair et al., 2019; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Moreover, the AVE values for all the constructs were higher than the suggested cut-off of 0.50 and therefore created convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

For Child Well-being (CWB), the measure had seven indicators initially. The internal consistency was found to be acceptable ($\alpha = 0.835$; rho_A = 0.847; CR = 0.875). Two indicators—CWB_3 (Engaged and motivated in school) and CWB_4 (Active and physically healthy), boasted relatively low factor loadings of 0.61 and 0.641, respectively. Since indicators with a loading of less than 0.70 add less to AVE, they were removed (Hair et al., 2021). The five indicators that were kept had a large loading (0.718 to 0.768), with an AVE of 0.501, thus having adequate convergent validity (see Table 1)

Emotional Intelligence (EI) was measured using five indicators. The construct achieved robust internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.803$; rho_A = 0.806; CR = 0.864). While EI_3 (Child shows empathy) had a slightly lower loading (0.697) compared to the ideal threshold, it was retained due to its theoretical importance (Chin, 1998). The remaining items loaded well (0.733 to 0.792), and the construct achieved an AVE of 0.56, confirming convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Parental Digital Literacy (PDL) comprised six indicators. The construct demonstrated strong reliability ($\alpha = 0.856$; rho_A = 0.872; CR = 0.893). Although two indicators, PDL_2 (Search the internet for parenting/child information) and PDL_4 (Distinguish trustworthy vs. false information), had slightly low loadings (0.674 and 0.671), they were retained as their values fall within the acceptable range for exploratory studies (Hair et al., 2019; Hulland, 1999) and their theoretical contribution is critical. The remaining indicators showed strong loadings ranging from 0.765 to 0.891, with an AVE of 0.585, confirming convergent validity.

Taken together, the findings presented in Table 1 confirm that all constructs achieved adequate reliability and convergent validity, thus supporting the suitability of the measurement model for further structural analysis.

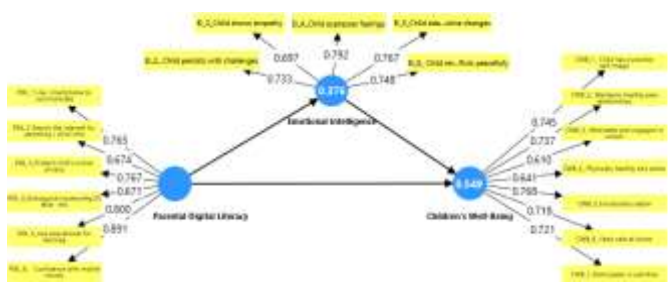

Figure 2. Measurement Model

Table 1. Measurement Model

Construct & Indicators	Loading	Cronbach's α̇>0.7	rh_o_>0.7	CR>0.7	AVE>0.5
Child Well-being		**0.835**	**0.847**	**0.875**	**0.501**
CWB_1_ Child has a positive self-image	0.745				
CWB_2_ Maintains healthy peer relationships	0.737				
CWB_3_ Motivated and engaged in school	0.61				
CWB_4_ Physically healthy and active	0.641				
CWB_5_Emotionally stable	0.768				
CWB_6_ Feels safe at home	0.718				
CWB_7_Participates in activities	0.721				
Emotional Intelligence		**0.803**	**0.806**	**0.864**	**0.56**
EI_2_ Child persists with challenges	0.733				
EI_3_Child shows empathy	0.697				
EI_4_Child expresses feelings	0.792				
EI_5_Child adapts to routine changes	0.767				
EI_6_ Child resolves conflicts peacefully	0.748				
Parental Digital Literacy		**0.856**	**0.872**	**0.893**	**0.585**
PDL_1 Use smartphone to communicate	0.765				
PDL_2_Search the internet for parenting/child infor	0.674				
PDL_3_Protect child's online privacy	0.767				
PDL_4_Distinguish trustworthy,vs false info	0.671				
PDL_5_Use education for learning	0.8				
PDL_6_ Confidence with mobile money	0.891				

4.2 Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was evaluated through the Fornell–Larcker criterion, which compares the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of each construct to its respective correlations to other constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). In Table 2, it is presented that the square roots of the AVEs for Child Well-being (0.708), Emotional Intelligence (0.748), and Parental Digital Literacy (0.765) were greater than their inter-construct correlations. The correlation between Child Well-being and Emotional Intelligence was 0.693, for example, which is lower than the square roots of AVEs for both constructs (0.708 and 0.748). Similarly, those for Child Well-being and Parental Digital Literacy (0.631) and Emotional Intelligence and Parental Digital Literacy (0.613) were lower than their AVE square roots. These findings indicate that each construct was empirically distinct, which meets the Fornell–Larcker criterion and establishes discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2019; Henseler et al., 2015).

Table 2. Discriminant Validity

	Child Well-Being	Emotional Intelligence	Parental Digital Literacy
Child Well-Being	0.708		
Emotional Intelligence	0.693	0.748	
Parental Digital Literacy	0.631	0.613	0.765

4.3 Assessment of Model Fit

The overall fit of the model was evaluated with key indices for the measurement and structural model: (1) coefficient of determination (R^2), (2) predictive relevance (Q^2), and (3) overall global fit indices. The indices for the measurement and structural model fit, are presented in Table 3 and were deemed acceptable.

With respect to the endogenous constructs, Child Well-being reported an R^2 value of 0.549 or approximately 55% of the variance in Child Well-being was explained by the models' predictors. Emotional Intelligence also reported an R^2 value of 0.376 or approximately 38% of the variance in Emotional Intelligence was accounted for. Per Chin (1998) and Hair et al. (2019), R^2 values reported are moderate. Parental Digital Literacy, the exogenous construct, was not assigned an R^2.

Predictive relevance was estimated using the Stone–Geisser's Q^2 values acquired through the blindfolding procedure. Again, Child Well-being (Q^2 = 0.501) and Emotional Intelligence (Q^2 = 0.56) had positive values greater than zero, confirming predictive relevance for both constructs. (Fornell & Cha, 1994; Hair et al., 2021.).

On global model fit, the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) was 0.076, lower than the conservative threshold value of 0.08, indicating that the fit between the data collected and the model is satisfactory (Henseler et al., 2014). The d_ULS (0.986) and d_G (0.286) also show that the errors in estimation by the model are satisfactory. The Chi-square value (508.395), whilst significant, is to be anticipated from large models, and fit interpretation is thus more and more dependent on other indices. Finally, the Normed Fit Index (NFI = 0.807) exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.80 (Bentler & Bonett, 1980), again confirming adequate model fit.

Thus, the findings demonstrate that the model satisfies recommended thresholds for explanatory power, predictive relevance, and global fit, thereby ensuring adequate support for the structural model assessment.

Table 3. Model Fit

Construct	Average variance extracted (AVE)	R^2	Q^2
Child Well-Being	0.501	0.549	0.501
Emotional Intelligence	0.56	0.376	0.56
Parental Digital Literacy	0.585		
SRMR	0.076		
d_ULS	0.986		
d_G	0.286		
Chi-square	508.395		
NFI	0.807		

4.4 Measurement of Structural Model

The structural model was validated by examining the strength and significance of hypothesized relationships between constructs of this study. The outcome in Table 4 and in Figure 3 shows that all hypothesized relationships between constructs were confirmed to be present by demonstrating that t-values of all were greater than the critical value of 1.96 at the 5% level of significance and the p-values were equal to 0.000. These findings are found to have high statistical significance (Hair et al., 2021). Hypothesis 1 (H1) examined the direct effect of Parental Digital Literacy on Child Well-Being and was validated ($t = 5.791$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that parents' embrace of digital resources and tools helps to improve children's overall well-being. Hypothesis 2 (H2) attempted to determine if Parental Digital Literacy had a positive effect on Emotional Intelligence, and this was well-supported ($t = 16.374$, $p < 0.001$.). That is, higher parental capability in digital literacy, exhibits a correlational impact on children's emotional intelligence. Hypothesis 3 (H3) tested if Emotional Intelligence has a positive impact on Child Well-Being. The evidence supporting this correlation was very robust again ($t = 9.330$, $p < 0.001$). Children's emotional intelligence was linked to a higher probability for well-being and was consistent with previous literature that has examined the relationship between socio-emotional competence and child outcomes.

Last but not least, Hypothesis 4 (H4) examined the mediation of Emotional Intelligence on the relationship of Parental Digital Literacy with Child Well-being. The mediation was significant ($t = 7.454$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that parental digital literacy not only has a direct effect on child well-being but also indirectly enables to improve the child's well-being through its positive effect on children's emotional intelligence.

When taking together, these findings present compelling empirical support for the hypothesized model that focuses on the important roles of parental digital literacy and emotional intelligence on child well-being.

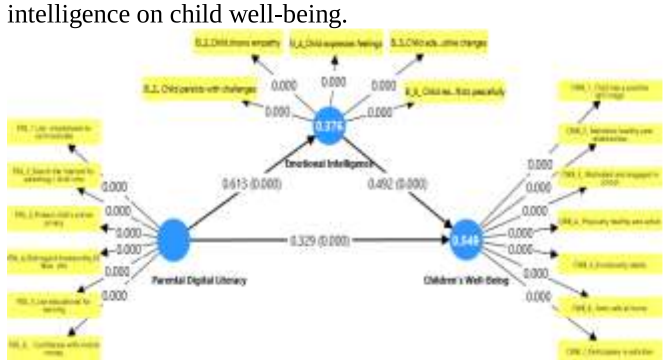

Figure 3. Structural Model

Table 4. Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses	t-value	p-value	result
H1: Parental Digital Literacy -> Child Well-Being	5.791	0.001	Accepted
H2: Parental Digital Literacy -> Emotional Intelligence	16.374	0.001	Accepted
H3:Emotional Intelligence -> Child Well-Being	9.33	0.001	Accepted
H4:Parental Digital Literacy -> Emotional Intelligence -> Child Well-Being	7.454	0.001	Accepted

5. Discussion of Findings

This study clearly shows that how aware their parents are of tech and how emotionally intelligent they are have a very big impact on how well their children do.

First, it would seem that if parents recognize tech, then their children do well ($t = 5.791$, $p < 0.001$). Other studies have reported that parents who know the internet can help their children with web things, keep them away from what is bad, and help them learn and grow socially and emotionally. (Livingstone & Helsper, 2008; Tomczyk & Potyrała, 2021). If you translate it to parents investing in children, that investment can guarantee that children will do better now and later on (Becker, 1994; Schultz, 1961). Other studies in recent decades also show that how parents handle technology with children actually helps children overcome problems, socially integrate, and boost their self-esteem (Syukur et al., 2024; Vissenberg et al., 2022).

Second, Hypothesis 2 (H2) supported a positive and significant connection between the digital literacy of parents and children's emotional intelligence ($t = 16.374$, $p < 0.001$). Parents who are more digitally literate are in a better position to practice healthy digital habits and mediate children's use of technology that supports learning self-regulation, empathy, and adaptive emotional skills (Nabi & Wolfers, 2022; Utami et al., 2022). This finding supports existing studies on how digital literacy can facilitate socio-emotional children's development via interactive online learning (Saleha et al., 2022; Supriyadi & Maesyaroh, 2023). Using skill formation theory, these findings present the process of cumulative capability formation where the capability of parents produces complementary socio-emotional skills in children (Cunha & Heckman, 2007; Heckman, 2006).)

Third, Hypothesis 3 (H3) established that child well-being is accounted for by emotional intelligence to a large extent ($t = 9.330$, $p < 0.001$). This is consistent with a broad literature that has reported hundreds of studies in which children who were identified as being emotionally intelligent were better able to cope with adversity, more socially competent, and more psychologically stable and hence enjoyed higher subjective and psychological well-being (Llamas-Díaz et al., 2022; Sánchez-Núñez et al., 2020). Emotional intelligence endows children with stress management capacity, regulation of emotions, and collaborative interpersonal relationships, some of the most important elements of well-being (Mayer et al., 2004; Petrides & Furnham, 2003). Thus, such a finding holds the importance of socio-emotional competency as a complement to cognitive capacity in the determination of life outcomes (Haveman & Wolfe, 1995).

Finally, Hypothesis 4 (H4) confirmed the mediating role of emotional intelligence between parental digital competence and child well-being ($t = 7.454$, $p < 0.001$). This implies that parents' digital literacy enhances not only directly but also indirectly by enhancing the emotional intelligence of children. The result is consistent with earlier studies that explain emotional intelligence as the key mechanism through which parental behavior and family resources are translated into child well-being (Barros & Sacau-Fontenla, 2021; Szcześniak & Tułecka, 2020). Following the human capital theory, the mediation effect explains how parents' investment in digital competence accumulates its returns to development through emotional abilities formed that lead to improved well-being (Heckman, 2006).

Overall, these findings highlight the interconnected roles of digital capability and emotional intelligence in supporting child flourishing, with parent digital ability investments paying dividends later in child development. By connecting technical competence to social-emotional development, families are more likely to equip children to thrive in a more digitalized world.

6. Implications

The findings of the research have robust policy, theory, and practice implications. Theoretically, they contribute to Human Capital Theory (Schultz, 1961; Becker, 1994) by siting parents' digital competence as an intangible asset with direct and indirect impacts on child well-being through the development of emotional intelligence, thereby enriching existing models of skill formation (Cunha & Heckman, 2007). In practice, evidence suggests that empowering parents with digital literacy skills such as secure internet use, information critical thinking, and digital mediation can potentially contribute a lot towards children's socio-emotional development and overall well-being and promote the significance of school- and parent-centered education interventions integrating digital and socio-emotional learning. Policy-wise, the study focuses on investing in parents' digital inclusion programs, particularly in areas where there are still access and skills disparities, and emotional intelligence as a priority area of development to ensure whole-child support through education and child welfare policies in order to ensure whole-child support within an increasingly digitized world.

7. Conclusion and Recommendation

This study examined the influence of parents' digital literacy on children's well-being, and more specifically, the mediating role of emotional intelligence. The results indicated that parents' digital literacy has a direct influence on children's well-being and a positive influence on children's emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence, therefore, was revealed to play a significant role in contributing to child well-being and in mediating the influence of parental digital literacy on child well-being. The findings emphasize the joint function of parental competencies and children's social-emotional competencies in promoting integrated child development. The study contributes theoretically by extending Human Capital Theory to the digital context, emphasizing that parental digital literacy is a capital that enables both short- and long-term child outcomes. Practically, the implications point to the necessity of equipping parents with digital literacy skills and embedding socio-emotional learning in child development programs. Decision-makers are urged to put high on their agenda initiatives for the digital inclusion of parents and incorporate emotional intelligence development into education and family-support policies. Overall, the study corroborates that linking digital competence and emotional skill development is central to supporting children's well-being in current digitally mediated environments.

8. Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest in relation to this manuscript.

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