Family Digital Involvement and Perceived Peer Online Misconduct in a Ghanaian Secondary School Sample

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ABSTRACT

Family involvement may shape both young people's online experiences and how they recognise and report those experiences. This article examines that distinction through a secondary analysis of reported cross-sectional survey summaries for 384 secondary-school students in Ghana. Questionnaire inspection identifies a six-item family-involvement composite encompassing guidance, oversight, platform knowledge and access to discussion. The eight-item outcome concerns conduct attributed to students in general and its relational consequences, rather than respondents' own offending. Reported means were 2.91 (SD = 0.81) for family involvement and 2.58 (SD = 0.83) for perceived misconduct. Greater family involvement was associated with lower perceived-misconduct scores ($r = -.462$, $p < .001$); the unadjusted regression accounted for 21.3% of outcome-score variance. A reconstructed 95% confidence interval for the correlation was [−.537, −.379], assuming independent observations. The association is consistent with differences in online experience, exposure or reporting, but the available summaries cannot distinguish these explanations. Unavailable participant records and incomplete sampling documentation limit reproducibility, adjustment and generalisation. The article contributes a framework that separates the observed association from candidate mechanisms and identifies evidence needed to evaluate them. Its international relevance concerns the alignment of digital-parenting measures with the outcomes they can support. Family-support evaluation should distinguish reduced harm from changes in awareness and disclosure, while assessing participation and access to help.

Keywords: digital parenting; family involvement; perceived peer misconduct; secondary students; Ghana

INTRODUCTION

Family involvement is often examined as a resource for safer adolescent digital participation. Yet the meaning of a favourable association depends on what families are reported to do and what the outcome measures. Guidance about respectful sharing, restrictions on access, knowledge of platforms and availability for conversation serve different purposes. They may influence encounters with online harm, but they may also influence what young people recognise as harmful and are willing to report. This article argues that these behavioural and informational possibilities must be distinguished before an association is translated into a recommendation for families.

The distinction is particularly consequential when a family measure refers to the respondent's own household while an outcome refers to students in general. Reports about other students' conduct describe a perceived social environment; they do not establish the respondent's involvement in an incident. A lower score could accompany fewer harmful experiences, less opportunity to observe them or a different interpretation of what occurred. Perceptions remain valuable evidence of students' perspectives, provided they are not treated as interchangeable with incident prevalence or personal offending.

We examine this problem using reported survey findings from a Ghanaian doctoral study of digital social ecologies (Afriyie, 2026). The source presents a negative association between family digital supervision and an outcome labelled cyberdelinquent behaviour. The questionnaire content supports more bounded terms: family digital involvement for the combination of guidance, knowledge, oversight and discussion, and perceived peer online misconduct for agreement with statements about conduct attributed to students. These terms clarify the scope of the evidence without changing the source scores or claiming validation of new scales.

Ghana provides a substantive setting for this question because digital participation can extend across household, school and commercial access arrangements. Kyei-Arthur et al. (2024), drawing on national survey data and qualitative accounts, describe access through smartphones, computers and internet cafés, including the use of relatives' devices. Such arrangements make the location and opportunity for adult involvement relevant to interpretation. Their study concerns a different sample, age range and collection period; its estimates cannot describe the participants analysed here. It nevertheless establishes why the meaning of supervision should be examined within specific access conditions rather than assumed to be uniform.

This concern connects the Ghanaian analysis to an international measurement problem. Modecki et al. (2022) documented variation in digital-parenting measurement and called for greater attention to reciprocal influence, family heterogeneity and support beyond parents. A composite covering rules, knowledge and discussion can summarise involvement, but its coefficient cannot identify which practice matters or through what process. The present study examines this interpretive problem at the boundary between household practices and perceptions of the wider student environment.

The contribution has two connected parts. Empirically, we report the family-involvement association using the available survey summaries and make the numerical reconstruction transparent. Conceptually, we distinguish changes in online experience from changes in recognition and reporting, then specify how future research could separate them. The aim is to make a local result useful for comparative scholarship through clear constructs and testable explanations. The available aggregate evidence supports this bounded contribution; it does not support a causal estimate, an evaluation of particular parenting practices or national generalisation.

Study Objectives and Scope

The study describes the content and reported levels of the two composites and examines their reported association. Its focal research question is whether stronger family digital involvement is associated with lower perceived peer online misconduct in the source sample. A second, interpretive question asks which explanations remain plausible given the wording of the measures and the cross-sectional design. Domain-specific scores, subgroup associations and students' ratings of helpful practices cannot be estimated from the available summaries and are reserved for future research.

Conceptual Background

Distinguishing Family Practices

The idea that parental knowledge necessarily reflects active surveillance has long been questioned. Stattin and Kerr (2000) distinguished what parents know from how they learn it, including information adolescents disclose voluntarily. Applied to the present questionnaire, knowing which platforms a student uses could arise through conversation, shared activity, inspection or another route. The item does not identify the route. Likewise, the ability to discuss an online problem measures perceived access to conversation, not the frequency or quality of actual disclosure. Treating these items as interchangeable indicators of surveillance would narrow their meaning without empirical justification.

Longitudinal evidence illustrates why practices and outcomes need to be differentiated. Doty et al. (2025) found that active media parenting was associated with later mental health through social efficacy, whereas restrictive media parenting predicted reduced online risk-taking without a corresponding association with later mental health. These findings do not identify the mechanism behind the Ghanaian correlation. They show that

conclusions about digital parenting depend on the particular practice and outcome examined, making a universal interpretation of an overall involvement score inappropriate.

Sevilla-Fernández et al. (2025) reviewed 32 studies of parental mediation and young people's social-network use. Their synthesis reported associations with reduced use and related risks but uncertainty about which strategy or combination was most effective for particular problems. They also identified an absence of studies examining benefits associated with social-network use within the review. This matters for the present analysis: fewer reported concerns alone cannot establish that young people have safer and more beneficial digital participation. The outcome's referent and the opportunities retained must also be considered.

Family involvement can also vary as a pattern of practices. Navarro and Jensen (2026) identified distinct profiles of digital parental mediation in a United States parent sample. Their analysis illustrates heterogeneity that a single overall score may obscure. Two households with similar composite scores could combine rules, modelling, discussion and knowledge differently. The Ghanaian summaries do not permit a comparable profile analysis. Consequently, the present interpretation treats the composite as a broad reported characteristic, while leaving the configuration of practices unresolved.

Interpreting Perceptions of Peer Conduct

Digital peer relationships can extend the audience, persistence and circulation of ordinary social exchanges. Nesi et al. (2018) developed a framework for understanding how social-media features transform adolescent peer relations. That framework helps explain why a student may encounter an incident through a forwarded message or an audience response without taking part in its original production. In the present study, however, the questionnaire does not identify the route through which respondents learned about the conduct they describe. Awareness of an incident and participation in it therefore remain empirically separate possibilities.

Perceived misconduct may reflect actual events, but the relationship is not one-to-one. Respondents differ in their opportunity to see an exchange, their interpretation of it and their willingness to endorse a general statement. A student who belongs to several online groups may know about more incidents than a student with limited access. Another may judge an exchange as harmful after discussing it with an adult. These are plausible measurement pathways rather than findings from the current survey. They show why an outcome framed around students in general cannot identify a respondent's offending history.

The referent also has implications for aggregation. Several students from one school could be reporting the same highly visible event. Alternatively, a respondent could be thinking about students outside the sampled school. Because the instrument does not define a bounded peer group or a recall period, the responses cannot be translated into a count of unique incidents within a school or term. The score describes agreement with the item set. Its value lies in that reported perspective, provided the interpretation remains aligned with the wording.

Resources and International Relevance

Family participation in digital guidance depends partly on resources and readiness. Zhao et al. (2023) examined differences in parental mediation associated with forms of parental capital and digital-parenting readiness. This directs attention to the conditions under which involvement is possible, rather than assuming that a low score identifies parental indifference. In the present analysis, household resources and general relationship quality are not available as covariates. They remain possible explanations for the observed association and relevant considerations for the design of family support.

Research across settings further directs attention to the quality and feasibility of involvement. Ventouris et al. (2025) found that interviewed Greek parents felt insufficiently prepared to manage early adolescents' social-media engagement, while Asici et al. (2025) reported positive associations between helicopter parenting and social-media addiction among Turkish adolescents. These studies concern different constructs, populations and designs, so they cannot validate or contradict the present coefficient directly. Their relevance is to question the assumption that increasing the amount of involvement is necessarily beneficial. Comparative research should first establish what a practice means, what resources it requires and which outcome it is intended to influence.

METHOD

Design and Source Materials

This article is a secondary analysis of survey summaries and questionnaire content presented in an unpublished doctoral manuscript (Afriyie, 2026). The parent study describes an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design involving secondary students and school personnel in Ghana. We examine the family-involvement and perceived-misconduct composites, together with the descriptive information needed to interpret their association. No new participants were recruited, and individual response records were unavailable. The analysis therefore combines interpretation of reported statistics with inspection of item content and arithmetic checks rather than a reanalysis of participant-level data.

The extraction covered the response-accounting table, demographic summary, composite descriptive and reliability tables, focal correlation and simple regression, and corresponding questionnaire sections. We checked numerical compatibility using identities for ordinary least-squares regression with one predictor and an intercept. We also examined each measure's referent, response options and content. The analysis was not preregistered. It is an interpretive secondary analysis, with reconstructed intervals explicitly distinguished from source-reported estimates.

The same reported sample and perceived-misconduct measure also underpin a related manuscript examining harmful online exposure and peer reinforcement (Kaziya & Danquah, 2026). That manuscript addresses exposure–reinforcement pathways; the present article examines the family-involvement association and the interpretation of a composite that combines guidance, knowledge and oversight. Shared sample descriptions and outcome characteristics provide the common methodological context. The papers are not independent replications. The present analysis does not reproduce the related paper's indirect-association model or treat its findings as additional evidence for the family coefficient.

Participants and Sampling Information

The source reports 400 questionnaires distributed, 392 returned and eight excluded because of substantial missing responses, leaving 384 records for analysis. The return proportion was 98.0%, and the retained proportion of all distributed questionnaires was 96.0%. These denominators answer different questions and are reported separately. Exclusion of eight returned questionnaires represents approximately 2.0% of returns. The available report does not establish how nonrespondents or excluded respondents differed from those retained.

The retained sample comprises 196 male and 188 female students; 252 attended public schools and 132 private schools. Locality categories comprise 174 urban, 126 peri-urban and 84 rural students. These counts describe the reported sample, not population coverage. Although the parent methodology proposes multistage selection and stratification where possible, the completed school frame, school count, collection dates and realised selection procedures are insufficiently documented for verification. Selection probabilities and sampling weights cannot be recovered, and a particular region or set of schools cannot be identified reliably. Accordingly, the population claim is restricted to the reported sample.

Age was recorded in the questionnaire using three categories: 12–14 years, 15–17 years and 18 years and above. These definitions govern the present account. Frequencies for these exact bands cannot be recovered from the aggregate demographic table, whose age boundaries differ; an age distribution and age-specific analyses are therefore not reported. The open-ended adult category does not establish a precise upper age limit. Grade-specific findings are also omitted because the reported Form 4 category is not sufficiently documented. These constraints limit developmental comparisons without changing the reported focal association.

Family Digital Involvement

Family digital involvement is defined here as students' reported experience of a parent or guardian's engagement with their internet use through guidance, oversight, knowledge and access to discussion. It is operationalised using the source's six-item family digital supervision composite. The items concern discussion of responsible

internet use, monitoring of phone or internet activity, rules governing time online, knowledge of platforms used, availability for discussion of online problems and help in understanding harmful online behaviour. Responses use five agreement categories, from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The midpoint is labelled not sure; it is not a frequency category or evidence that a practice is absent.

The six items represent four overlapping content domains: guidance (responsible-use discussion and help interpreting online harm), oversight (monitoring and time rules), knowledge (platform awareness), and communicative support (availability for discussing problems). These are conceptual groupings of item content, not empirically validated subscales. The source composite is retained without generating domain-specific scores. A higher score indicates stronger average endorsement of the six statements, subject to the source's scoring procedures. The items do not establish whether knowledge comes from voluntary disclosure or inspection, whether rules are negotiated, or whether support is experienced as helpful. Joint participation in digital activities is not separately measured.

The source reports a mean of 2.91, a standard deviation of 0.81 and Cronbach's alpha of .81 for the six items. The reliability estimate concerns internal consistency in the reported sample. It does not establish that all six items measure one dimension, that they operate equivalently across groups or that the composite predicts behavioural change. Transparent construct interpretation requires more than a reliability coefficient, as emphasised by Flake and Fried (2020). Accordingly, family digital involvement is an interpretive description of the available content, not a claim of independent scale validation.

Perceived Peer Online Misconduct

The eight-item outcome covers online insults or embarrassment, fake accounts used to disturb others, unauthorised sharing of private material, rumours, unauthorised account access, threatening, mocking or exclusionary communication, forwarding harmful content and effects on school relationships. Seven items attribute acts to students in general; the final item asks about relational consequences. The same five agreement options are used. No explicit recall period appears in these items, and the relevant group of students is not defined as a particular class, friendship group or school.

Perceived peer online misconduct is operationally defined as respondents' agreement with this eight-item set concerning conduct attributed to students in general and its relational consequences. The score does not measure the respondent's own perpetration or a verified frequency of incidents. It does not distinguish direct experience of victimisation, witnessing, reports heard from others or general impressions; these information sources cannot be separated retrospectively. "Peer" denotes the instrument's general student referent, not a nominated friendship group. The source reports a mean of 2.58, a standard deviation of 0.83 and alpha of .88 for the composite.

The source composite is retained in full. Excluding the relational-consequence item or evaluating the scale's dimensionality would require item-level records or covariance information. The broader questionnaire's reported exploratory factor-analysis summary does not supply the focal loadings needed to validate a revised interpretation. Renaming the outcome therefore clarifies its content without resolving its measurement limitations.

Missing Responses and Statistical Approach

For retained questionnaires, the source reports item-level missingness ranging from 0.0% to 1.8%, with no retained questionnaire exceeding 5.0% missing responses across the instrument. It describes calculating composites from available valid responses within each construct. The precise minimum number of answered items required for each focal score is not specified. Consequently, the current analysis cannot reproduce individual composite values, assess whether respondents contributed different item combinations or examine the consequences of alternative missing-data rules.

The focal estimates are the reported Pearson correlation and a simple linear regression of perceived misconduct on family involvement. They are unadjusted. The regression does not establish an association independent of age, access, household resources, school context or general family relationships. The correlation and the one-

predictor regression are alternative expressions of the same relationship, rather than two independent confirmations. Source values are preserved at their reported precision, and small differences between reconstructed statistics and reported outputs are assessed in light of rounding.

We reconstruct approximate 95% confidence intervals from the rounded summaries: a Fisher-transformed interval for the correlation using N = 384 and a t-based interval for the slope using its reported standard error and 382 degrees of freedom. These conventional calculations assume independent observations and cannot account for school clustering or unknown selection probabilities. Appendix A specifies the calculations. No adjusted model, subgroup test or causal effect is estimated.

Ethics and Access to Research Materials

This secondary analysis uses aggregate survey results and questionnaire content from Afriyie (2026), with no new recruitment, participant contact or access to identifying response records. The parent study's protocol specifies institutional ethical clearance and permission from education authorities and schools, voluntary participation, parental or guardian consent and student assent for minors, and the right to withdraw. These are reported here as provisions of the documented protocol. No new ethics approval or exemption is asserted for the present analysis.

The protocol excludes names, usernames, passwords and identifiable digital material from the questionnaire. It specifies confidentiality, restricted access to records and safeguarding support where discussion of online harm causes distress. No identifiable participant material is reproduced in this article. Access to underlying records remains subject to the data custodian and applicable consent and institutional requirements.

RESULTS

Descriptive Scores and Association

Table 1 summarises the two composites. Both means fall below the response midpoint of 3, labelled not sure. The means describe average agreement; they do not establish inadequate family involvement or a low incidence of misconduct. No validated interpretive thresholds or item-level means are available. The standard deviations show variability in composite scores but cannot identify which family practices or forms of misconduct varied most.

Table 1 Reported Composite Characteristics

Composite	Items	M	SD	α
Family digital involvement	6	2.91	0.81	.81
Perceived peer online misconduct	8	2.58	0.83	.88

Note. Source: Afriyie (2026), Tables 8 and 9. N = 384 as reported. Five agreement categories were used; category 3 is not sure. Composite labels describe item content and do not establish new scale validation.

The reported correlation is negative, $r = -.462$, $p < .001$, with N = 384. Students who more strongly endorsed family-involvement items tended to endorse perceived-misconduct items less strongly. The reconstructed 95% interval is [−.537, −.379], conditional on independent observations (Table 2).

Unadjusted Regression and Numerical Consistency

Table 2 Reported Association and Reconstructed Intervals

Quantity	Reported value	Approximate 95% CI
Pearson correlation, r	−.462	[−.537, −.379]
Unstandardised slope, B	−0.474 (SE = 0.047)	[−0.566, −0.382]
Standardised slope, β	−.462	—
Intercept	3.959	—
R^2 / adjusted R^2	.213 / .211	—
Model test, F(1, 382)	103.44	—

Note. Source: Afriyie (2026), Tables 12 and 13. The source reports $p < .001$ for the correlation, slope and model test. Confidence intervals were calculated for this article from rounded source statistics and assume independent observations. They are not adjusted for school clustering. The correlation and regression describe the same unadjusted association.

The reported regression has an unstandardised slope of −0.474 (SE = 0.047), with a reconstructed 95% interval of [−0.566, −0.382]. A one-point difference in family involvement corresponds to a fitted difference of approximately 0.47 points in perceived misconduct. This is a between-respondent, unadjusted association; it does not estimate change caused by increasing involvement. Table 2 presents the complete focal model summary.

The numerical summaries are arithmetically compatible. Squaring the rounded correlation gives .213444, consistent with $R^2 = .213$, and combining the intercept, slope and family mean gives a fitted outcome mean of 2.57966, consistent with 2.58. The slope implied by the correlation and standard deviations is approximately −0.473, close to the reported −0.474. Small differences in reconstructed F and t statistics are compatible with rounding. These checks assess consistency among summaries; they do not verify the underlying records or the adequacy of the original model.

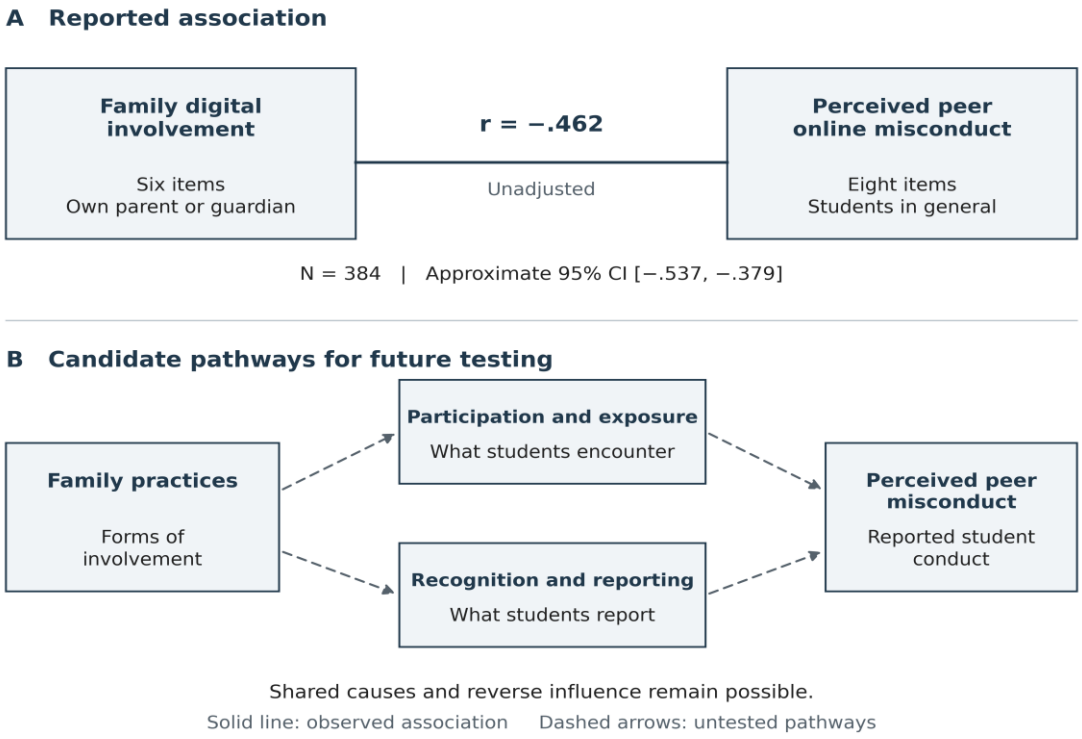
DISCUSSION

Family involvement and the perceived peer environment

Students reporting greater family digital involvement also reported lower perceived peer online misconduct. The magnitude of the reported correlation identifies a relationship worth investigating, while the questionnaire determines what that relationship concerns: household involvement and a respondent's view of conduct among students. The central interpretive point is that family practices could relate to this view through changes in experiences, exposure or reporting. Figure 1 distinguishes the observed association from two broad candidate pathways. Neither pathway was estimated in the source model.

The unadjusted model accounts for 21.3% of the variation in outcome scores within the reported sample. This is a description of statistical fit, not a percentage of incidents prevented. The outcome combines judgements about conduct and relational consequences, while its referent extends beyond the respondent's household. Its association with family involvement could therefore reflect both differences in the social environment encountered and differences in how that environment is appraised. This distinction connects the finding to the international concern with construct alignment in digital-parenting research (Modecki et al., 2022).

Figure 1 Observed association and candidate explanatory pathways



Note. Panel A reports the unadjusted association from Afriyie (2026), Tables 12 and 13; its reconstructed interval assumes independent observations and is not adjusted for school clustering. Panel B is an interpretive framework informed by the reviewed literature. Dashed arrows denote untested hypotheses. The diagram does not exclude shared causes or reverse influence.

Competing Explanations

A behavioural or exposure pathway offers one explanation. Family guidance and boundaries could accompany less involvement in harmful exchanges or reduced contact with settings where such exchanges occur. These possibilities are distinct: a student may encounter fewer incidents even if their own conduct does not change. A respondent's family practices also need not change the conduct of the broader student population described by the outcome. The current composite cannot isolate particular practices or distinguish a change in conduct from a change in opportunities to observe it.

An informational pathway offers a second explanation. Discussion with adults could help students recognise harmful exchanges, increasing their endorsement of misconduct items even if incidents become less frequent. Conversely, restricted access could reduce awareness and lower endorsement without reducing harm in the wider peer environment. Willingness to disclose concerns may also vary with anticipated adult responses. The observed negative association cannot identify which of these processes predominates. A family-support programme could consequently improve recognition or disclosure while producing no immediate fall in perceived-misconduct scores.

Shared causes provide an alternative to either pathway. Household resources, general family relationships or school climate could influence both composites. Shared reporting tendencies are also plausible because the same student supplies both scores: a broadly favourable appraisal of relationships could contribute to higher family ratings and fewer reported peer concerns. These possibilities do not show that the association is spurious, but they prevent its interpretation as an independent family effect. Table 3 translates these competing explanations into measurement and design requirements.

The direction of influence also remains unresolved. Families may change their practices after an incident, while students' disclosure may influence what adults know and do. Designating family involvement as the predictor in a cross-sectional regression does not establish temporal priority. Repeated measures should therefore capture

distinct practices, online experiences and disclosure over time, including incidents between waves. Longitudinal ordering would strengthen interpretation, but causal conclusions would still depend on credible treatment of confounding and measurement.

Table 3 Competing explanations and evidence needed to distinguish them

Candidate explanation	**Implication for interpretation**	**Evidence needed**
Changes in conduct or exposure	Fewer harmful experiences and fewer opportunities to observe them can both lower the score.	Separate reports of own actions, victimisation and witnessing; access and exposure measures.
Changes in recognition or reporting	Greater recognition or disclosure can increase reports even if underlying harm falls.	Recognition tasks, routes of awareness, disclosure measures and repeated incident reports.
Shared contextual influences	Resources, relationships or school conditions may contribute to both composite scores.	Substantively selected covariates and identified schools, with an appropriate clustered design.
Shared reporting tendencies	A general response tendency may contribute to the observed association.	Independent information sources and assessments of response processes.
Reverse influence	Incidents or disclosure may precede changes in family practices.	Repeated, temporally ordered measures with incident timing between waves.

Note. These are proposed explanations and design requirements, not additional results. The available aggregate summaries do not permit their relative contributions to be estimated.

Implications for Family and Youth Services

The findings support examining families as part of students' digital social environments. They do not identify an effective intervention or justify continuous inspection. Because the family composite includes access to discussion as well as oversight, a practical response should ask students and caregivers which forms of help are understandable, acceptable and feasible. This follows the distinction between parental knowledge and its sources (Stattin & Kerr, 2000): the same apparent level of knowledge may arise through trust, voluntary disclosure or inspection, with different implications for the relationship.

Schools and youth services could use this distinction when developing support with families. A conversation about respectful sharing, a negotiated boundary on access and a route for requesting help have different intended functions. Each should be specified and evaluated separately, with attention to adolescents' privacy, age and opportunities for learning and social participation. This is a proposal for development and testing, not a package demonstrated to work in the present sample.

Evaluation should distinguish the occurrence of harm from its recognition and disclosure. A useful response may initially increase reported concerns because students become more able or willing to describe them. Fewer complaints would therefore be an ambiguous success indicator on its own. Outcomes should include experiences of being harmed or harming others, access to trusted support, perceived helpfulness of responses and continued beneficial participation. None was evaluated as an intervention outcome in this study.

Implementation should also address unequal opportunities to participate. Zhao et al. (2023) link parental resources and digital-parenting readiness to mediation strategies, while Ghanaian research describes varied locations and means of access (Kyei-Arthur et al., 2024). Together, this literature supports examining practical constraints before classifying low involvement as parental indifference. The present data cannot identify which

households face those constraints. Locally developed support should therefore establish whether guidance assumes time, connectivity or platform knowledge that families lack and recognise other trusted adults where appropriate.

Strengthening the Next Study

The first priority is a clearer outcome. Future measurement should separate respondents' own actions, experiences of being targeted, witnessing, information received from others and beliefs about peer norms. Items should specify an appropriate recall period and the population being described. Consequences for relationships should be measured separately from acts unless a clearly justified measurement model supports combining them. These changes would allow a study to ask whether family involvement relates to behaviour, exposure, perception or several distinct outcomes, rather than leaving the referent implicit.

Cognitive interviews with students and caregivers could examine what monitoring, rules and access to discussion mean in the study setting. Item-level analysis should then assess dimensionality and comparability across groups. Sensitivity analyses could examine the relational-consequence item and alternative scoring rules, using the original records. Such changes should be documented transparently, including whether they were selected after inspecting the data.

A stronger statistical design would document recruitment and schools, retain protected school identifiers, and distinguish within-school from between-school variation where feasible. Covariates should follow a substantive model: exposure, resources and family relationships may be relevant, but adjustment for a variable on the pathway of interest changes the question estimated. Subgroup comparisons require consistent age and grade categories, suitable records and adequate group sizes. Students' assessments of which practices are helpful should be collected directly rather than inferred from a composite score.

For international comparison, the transferable contribution is the distinction between family practice, online experience and reported perception. Researchers should establish through cognitive interviews and measurement analysis whether the items carry comparable meanings across settings before interpreting differences in scores or coefficients as cultural differences. Sampling and access conditions also need to be reported consistently. The Ghanaian result offers a question for comparative testing; it does not establish a universal effect of family involvement.

Limitations

The analysis depends on an unpublished report and cannot reproduce its underlying survey analysis. Individual records, a complete scoring codebook, original statistical output and school identifiers were unavailable. Incomplete documentation of recruitment and school selection restricts assessment of selection and clustering. Inconsistent age groupings prevent reconstruction of the questionnaire's age distribution, and the reported Form 4 category remains unclear. These gaps limit developmental and population claims even where the numerical summaries agree.

The cross-sectional, unadjusted association cannot establish temporal order or distinguish shared causes from the proposed pathways. Both measures come from the same respondent, and the outcome lacks a bounded peer group and recall period. Its mixture of acts and relational consequences creates additional construct uncertainty. Internal consistency estimates do not establish dimensionality or comparability across groups. Reconstructed confidence intervals describe conventional sampling uncertainty conditional on independent observations; they do not incorporate unknown school dependence, selection or measurement error.

The interpretive framework and practical recommendations extend the discussion beyond the available estimates and remain untested. No programme was implemented, and the analysis cannot establish the acceptability, feasibility or effectiveness of any proposed practice. Access to the source records and more complete documentation are priorities for strengthening the empirical contribution.

CONCLUSION

Greater reported family digital involvement was associated with lower perceived peer online misconduct in a Ghanaian secondary-school sample. The result concerns two composite reports, not verified offending or a preventive effect. Its wider contribution is to show why the interpretation of digital-parenting evidence must distinguish what young people experience from what they notice and report. Family involvement may be relevant to both processes, but the present design cannot separate them. Future research should measure distinct practices and outcomes over time, address school context and shared causes, and establish comparability before transferring conclusions across settings. Family-support evaluation should assess harm, access to help and beneficial participation alongside changes in reporting.

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