


## **The Influence of Father's Parenting Practices, Self-Control, and Problematic Social Media Use on Mental Health Generation Z**

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
<p><b>Article history:</b></p> <p>Received June 18, 2025 Revised June 28, 2025 Accepted July 10, 2025</p> <hr/> <p><b>Corresponding Author:</b></p> <p>Khanifa Fajria Student at Departement of Family and Child Development Science, Faculty of Human Ecology, IPB University Email: ifa_khanifa@apps.ipb.ac.id</p>	<p>Social media has become an inseparable part of many people's daily lives. Increasing concerns have arisen regarding its negative impact on users' mental health. This study aims to identify and examine the influence family and Generation Z characteristics, father's parenting practices, self-control, problematic social media use, and mental health among Generation Z. The research was cross-sectional study design with purposive sampling. The study involved participants born between 1997 to 2012 (Generation Z), social media active users and still had a living father, whether living in the same household or separately. A total of 208 respondents participated in the study. Both primary and secondary data were used. Primary data were collected through interviews using questionnaires, while secondary data were obtained through literature reviews and previous research findings. The results showed that self-control had a significant negative effect on both problematic social media use and mental health. Furthermore, father's parenting practices have a significant negative influence on self-control and mental health. It is recommended that families with Generation Z children enhance their literacy and understanding of effective parenting practices. Fathers are also encouraged to take an active role in the parenting process to support the psychological and psychosocial well-being of Generation Z.</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b></p> <p>Father's parenting practices, self-control, problematic social media use, mental health, generation z</p> <p>This article is licensed under a <a href="https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/">Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License</a>.</p> 

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Social media, which is one of the results of technology, has become an inseparable part of the daily lives of many people. Various platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok provide easy and fast means of communication. Likewise, various contents allow people around the world to connect. However, there is more concern about the negative impact of social media on the mental health of its users. Mental health is a state of mental well-being that allows a person to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community<sup>[1]</sup>. Problematic social media use is one of factor that influence mental health<sup>[2]</sup>. Another factor that affects mental health is parenting practices.

Ineffective parenting practices will result in parental rejection of children which ultimately affects poorer mental health among adolescents<sup>[3]</sup>. Especially for fathers, fathers are heads of families who play an important role in the parenting process. Father involvement in the parenting process will improve a child's cognitive abilities, social skills, and self-confidence<sup>[4]</sup>. When playing with children, fathers tend to involve physicality, competitiveness, and uncertainty, this affects socio-emotional development later on<sup>[5]</sup>. Fathers who actively supervise and regulate their children's use of social media can prevent excessive behavior or involvement in risky online activities<sup>[6]</sup>.

As a negative social issue, individual problematic behavior not only affects physical well-being, but also affects the development of individual social functions, one of which is mental well-being. Therefore, to reduce the risk of these problems, individuals need to strengthen their self-control abilities<sup>[7]</sup>. In this context, it is important to understand the influence of paternal parenting practices, self-control, and problematic social media use on the mental health of generation z. Further research is needed to explain the more detailed relationship between these variables and their interactions. With a better understanding of the factors that influence the mental health of

generation z, appropriate preventive measures and interventions can be developed to reduce negative impacts and promote healthy and responsible use of social media platforms.

This study aims to 1) identify family characteristics and generation z characteristics, father's parenting practices, self-control, problematic social media use, and generation z mental health; and 2) identify the influence of family characteristics and generation z characteristics, father's parenting practices, self-control, and problematic social media use on generation z mental health.

## **2. METHOD**

The research was designed as a cross-sectional study. In data collection, the approach used is quantitative with purposive sampling. Bogor as one of the cities in West Java was chosen as the research location because it has a large percentage of internet users<sup>[8]</sup>. The research began in December 2024 to April 2025.

This study took samples with the criteria of active social media users in the birth year range of 1997 - 2012 (generation Z). Then, those who still have fathers either living in the same house or have separated houses. The respondents numbered 208 people. The data used in this study are primary data and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through information gathering from respondents by interviewing using a questionnaire covering family characteristics, generation z characteristics, fathering practices, self-control, and problematic social media use, and gen z mental health. Secondary data is data obtained based on literature studies and previous research results. The questionnaire was filled out in a self-administered or independent and voluntary manner.

The measurement of variables of father's parenting practices consists of 18 items. The questionnaire used is the Parenting and Family Adjustment Scales (PAFAS)<sup>[9]</sup>. This questionnaire has a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.7. In the self-control variable, the questionnaire used was the Brief Self Control Scale (BSCS)<sup>[10]</sup>. This questionnaire consists of 13 statement items with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.89. On problematic social media use consists of 10 statement items. The questionnaire used is the Social Media Use Integration Scale<sup>[11]</sup>. This questionnaire has a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.914. Then, mental health consists of 9 statement items. The questionnaire used is the Psychometric Properties of the Positive Mental Health Scale (PMH-scale)<sup>[12]</sup>. This questionnaire has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.93. All the questionnaires were modified and using a Likert scale of 1 to 5 ("1 = very inappropriate"; "2 = inappropriate"; "3 = so-so"; "4 = appropriate"; or "5 = very appropriate"). Fathering practices, self-control, problematic social media use, and mental health were categorized, namely <60 is categorized as low, 60.0-80.0 is categorized as medium, and >80.0 is categorized as high<sup>[13]</sup>. The data analysis used was descriptive analysis and Structural Equation Model analysis for the influence test.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **3.1. Results**

#### **3.1.1. Family and Generation Z Characteristics**

The largest number of respondents were in their teens (12-18 years old) reaching 80.2 percent, and the remaining 19.8 percent were in the early adulthood age range. In addition, the age of the father is categorized into early adulthood ( $\leq 40$  years), middle adulthood (41-60 years old), and late adulthood ( $> 60$  years old). Most of the respondents' fathers are in the middle adulthood category with a percentage of 78.3 percent. Based on the gender of generation z, more than half of gen z are female with a percentage of 58.7 percent. Then, most of generation z also live in urban areas at 71.2 percent, the rest live in rural areas. Based on generation z education, some gen z have completed/are currently undergoing education at the Junior High School (SMP) level with a percentage of 51.9 percent.

Based on birth order, this study is divided into three categories, namely eldest, middle, and youngest. Most of gen z are in the eldest child category at 48.6 percent. Furthermore, based on the monthly pocket money of generation z, most of them receive monthly pocket money of IDR 250,001 - IDR 500,000 at 32.7 percent. In terms of monthly family income, most families have a monthly income of IDR 1,000,000 - IDR 5,000,000 with a percentage of 43.8 percent. Based on the father's ethnicity, most of the respondents' fathers are from the Sundanese ethnic group, as many as 122 people with a percentage of 58.7 percent. Based on the father's occupation, most fathers work as private employees with a percentage of 34.6 percent. The next characteristic is family size. The results of the study showed that large families were dominated by small families ( $\leq 4$  people) with a percentage of 60.4 percent

#### **3.1.2. Father's parenting practices**

Based on the four dimensions of fathers' parenting practices, namely parenting consistency, coercive parenting, positive encouragement, and parent-child relationship, the highest proportion is in the low category. If we look at each dimension with reference to the Parenting and Family Adjustment Scales (PAFAS), the higher the score indicates a low level in each dimension. The results of the study showed that fathers in parenting practices were relatively consistent in their application (79.3%). The results also showed that almost all fathers did not use violence or threats in disciplining children (89.9%). Then, it was also found that more than half of fathers gave positive encouragement and praise when children achieved something or behaved commendably (77.9%). Then, the results of the study also showed that all respondents had a close relationship with their fathers (100%).

Table 1. Sample distribution of father's parenting practices

Category	Father's parenting practices dimensions							
	FPP1		FPP2		FPP3		FPP4	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Low	165	79.3	187	89.9	162	77.9	208	100
Moderate	39	18.8	20	9.6	28	13.5	0	0.0
High	4	1.9	11	0.5	18	8.7	0	0.0
Min – Max	5.00-85.00		0.00-85.00		0.00-100.00		0.00-100,0	
Mean±Std	45.07±15.06		33.00 ±18.05		41.34 ± 26.40		41.34 ± 26.40	

Note: FPP1= parental consistency; FPP2= coercive parenting; PPA3= positive encouragement; PPA4= parent-child relationship; min= minimum value

### 3.1.3 Self-control

Based on Table 2, most of the respondents in this study were in the moderate self-control category, which was 101 people or 48.6%. Meanwhile, respondents with low self-control also occupied a fairly large proportion, which was 91 people or 43.8%. Only a small proportion of respondents had high self-control, which was 16 people or 7.7%. This indicates that the majority of Generation Z in this study had moderate capacity in regulating impulses, controlling emotions, and setting long-term goals. However, the fairly large proportion in the low category is also a concern because this can be closely related to the emergence of risky behavior

Table 2. Sample distribution of Self-control

Category	Total of Self-control	
	n	%
Low	91	43.8
Moderate	101	48.6
High	16	7.7
Min – Max	29.17-100,00	
Mean±Std	60.52 ± 12.83	

### 3.1.4. Problematic Social Media Use

The results of the study showed that only a few respondents were in the high category (7.2 percent). Then, more than half of the respondents were in the low category in problematic social media use (63.9 percent). Although social media has become an integral part of the lives of respondents (generation Z), most are still at a level of use that does not lead to serious or pathological problems.

Table 3. Sample distribution of problematic social media use

Category	Total of problematic social media use	
	n	%
Low	133	63.9
Moderate	60	28.8
High	15	7.2
Min – Max	5.00-97.50	
Mean±Std	54.33 ± 16.21	

### 3.1.5. Mental Health

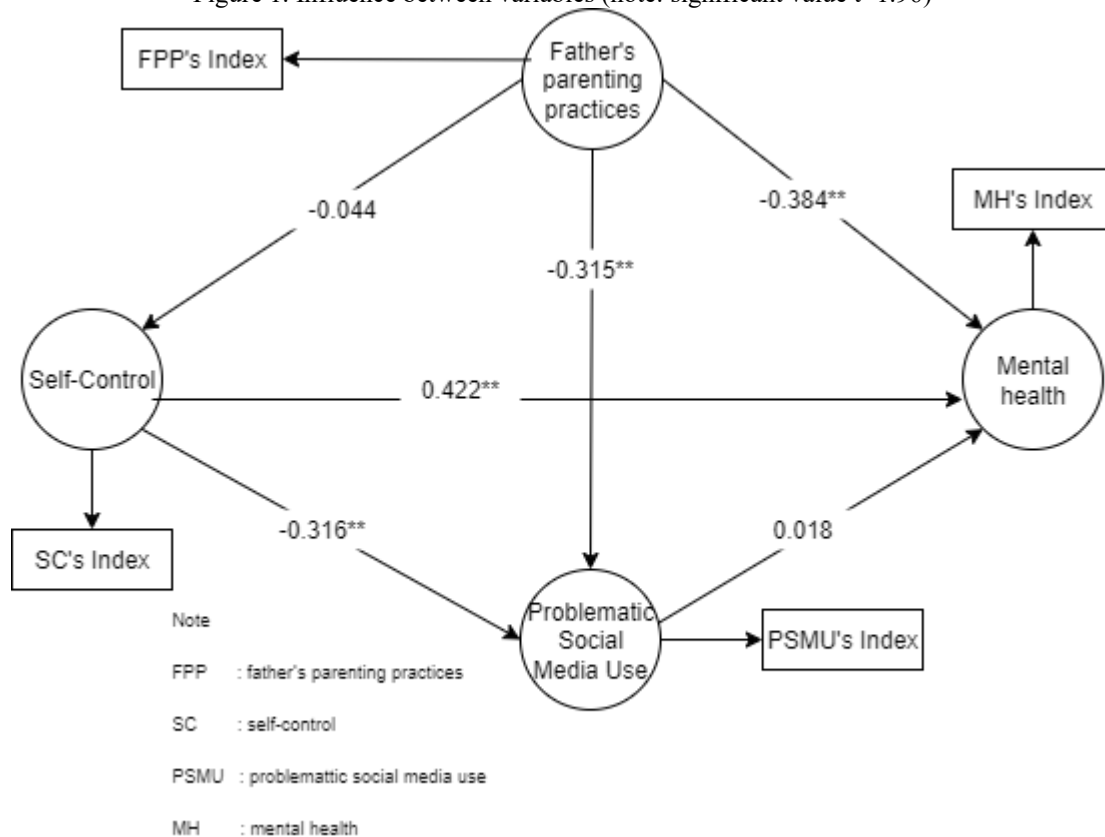
Table 4 describes that almost all respondents fall into the medium category, which is 48.1 percent, followed by the low category of 35.1 percent. This indicates that optimal psychological well-being has not been achieved by many respondents. In general, these data reflect that most respondents are in a fairly stable psychological condition, but also face certain challenges that can hinder their mental and emotional function optimally.

Table 4. Sample distribution of mental health

Category	Total of mental health	
	n	%
Low	73	35.1
Moderate	100	48.1
High	35	16.8
Min – Max	25.00-100.00	
Mean±Std	65.49 ± 15.62	

### 3.1.6. The Influence of Father's parenting practices, Self-Control, and Problematic Social Media Use on Generation Z's Mental Health

Figure 1 shows the direct effects between fathers' parenting practices, self-control, and problematic social media use on mental health.

Figure 1. Influence between variables (note: significant value  $t > 1.96$ )

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis model above has two paths of influence on the latent variable of generation z mental health, namely direct influence and indirect influence as follows. More complete influence test results are available in Table 5.

Table 5. An empirical model of the variables

Variables	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Total effect
<b>Mental Health</b>			
Problematic social media use	0.018		0.018
Father's parenting practices	-0.384**	-0.132	-0.516
Self-control	0.422	-0.006	0.416
<b>Self-control</b>			
Father's parenting practices	-0.315**		-0.315
<b>Problematic social media use</b>			
Father's parenting practices			

Variables	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Total effect
Self-control	-0.044 -0.316**	0.100	0.056 -0.316

Problematic social media use has a direct positive effect on mental health ( $\beta = 0.018$ :  $t > 1.96$ ), meaning that the higher the use of social media, the better the mental health of generation z will be. Then, father's parenting practices also have a significant positive effect directly ( $\beta = -0.384$  \*:  $t > 1.96$ ) and indirectly ( $\beta = -0.132$ :  $t > 1.96$ ) on mental health. This shows that the higher the support applied to parenting practices, the better mental health will be. In addition, self-control also has a direct positive effect ( $\beta = 0.422$ :  $t > 1.96$ ) and indirectly on mental health ( $\beta = -0.006$ :  $t > 1.96$ ), meaning that the higher the level of self-control, the better the mental health of generation z will be.

Father's parenting practices also have a significant negative effect on self-control ( $\beta = -0.315$  \*:  $t > 1.96$ ), meaning that high self-control in generation z will be formed when the parenting practices applied minimize inconsistency and coercion. Father's parenting practices also have a direct effect ( $\beta = -0.044$ :  $t > 1.96$ ) and indirect effect ( $\beta = 0.100$ :  $t > 1.96$ ) on problematic social media use. This shows that the higher the support given by the father, the higher the level of social media use. Then, problematic social media use is also directly significantly influenced by self-control ( $\beta = -0.316$  \*:  $t > 1.96$ ). This shows that the higher the level of self-control, the less problematic social media use will be.

### 3.2. Discussion

The results of the study showed that the majority of respondents (32.7%) received pocket money of IDR 250,001 - IDR 500,000 and 21.2 percent received less than IDR 250,000. This shows that the majority of Gen Z in this study are in a fairly limited spending range with more than 53 percent of respondents receiving pocket money below IDR 500,000 per month. Then, the majority of Gen Z family income is in the IDR 1,000,001 - IDR 5,000,000 group with the majority of respondents coming from small families ( $\leq 4$  people). Small families tend to have a lighter economic burden per household member. Birth of one new child reduces per capita consumption by around 20-65 percent over a period of four years in Indonesia<sup>[14]</sup>. This shows that each additional family member directly reduces the portion of individual consumption due to resources being divided among more people.

The results also show that the majority of respondents' fathers are from the Sundanese ethnic group. West Java Province is the most populous province in Indonesia (50 million people in 2024) and is a magnet for urbanization from other regions, for example the Javanese ethnic group. Generation z experienced the pressure of globalization through digital media, but with that gen z also uses social media to maintain and spread local cultural identity<sup>[15]</sup>. This shows that although urbanization and digitalization unite various ethnic groups, gen z still maintains regional identity (eg Sundanese, Javanese) through social media.

This study also found that the majority of respondents had fathers who worked as private employees. the majority of the population of West Java works as private employees<sup>[16]</sup>. Quality of parents' work, especially the stability of working hours, routine schedules, and adequate income, was positively correlated with children's mental health<sup>[17]</sup>. This study also found that the majority of respondents were firstborns. Firstborns tended to experience authoritative parenting, middle children felt a more authoritarian parenting style, and youngest children reported a permissive style<sup>[18]</sup>.

The results of the SEM test showed that self-control had a significant positive effect on mental health. Fluctuations in self-control were directly related to daily emotional conditions. Days when individuals had high self-control reported fewer negative affects and higher levels of life satisfaction. These findings confirm that self-control has a direct effect on the quality of mental health in the context of everyday life<sup>[19]</sup>.

Self-control also has a significant negative effect on problematic social media use. Self-control has a protective effect on problematic social media use<sup>[20]</sup>. Results showed that self-control is not only directly negatively related to problematic social media use, but also has an indirect effect through psychological mechanisms such as rejection sensitivity and loneliness.

Then, problematic social media use has no effect on mental health. Time and intensity of social media use did not significantly affect the emergence of symptoms of mental health disorders two years later. These results challenge the common assumption that problematic social media use always has a negative impact on an individual's psychology.

Then, father's parenting practices have a significant negative effect on mental health. In the context of Generation Z growing up in the digital era and facing high social pressure, parenting that emphasizes control without empathy tends to worsen their mental condition. Ineffective father parenting patterns, such as inconsistent use of punishment or lack of emotional support, have an effect on increasing the risk of mental health disorders<sup>[21]</sup>.

Father's parenting practices also have a significant negative effect on self-control. Harsh verbal and physical father control decreases effortful control or self-control, which then mediates aggressive behavior<sup>[22]</sup>. Father's parenting practices that tend to be authoritarian and harsh have been shown to weaken children's self-regulation capacity. However, father's parenting practices have no effect on problematic social media use. This finding

indicates that father's parenting practices, whether in the form of control, support, or responsiveness, do not directly affect individuals' tendencies to use social media problematically. Although some literature emphasizes the importance of parents' role in supervising children's online behavior<sup>[23]</sup>, several studies also show that in the context of the digital generation such as Gen Z, peer influence, online social pressure, and internal factors such as self-control and emotions, are more dominant in triggering unhealthy social media use<sup>[24]</sup>.

This study has limitations, namely respondents who filled out the generation z questionnaire, so this study only measured all variables based on what gen z felt, including father's parenting practices, this was still measured from the perception of children (gen z), so it did not describe the actual conditions. In further research, it is better to involve parents, especially fathers, to get more detailed information.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The average respondent is in the adolescent category (12-18 years old) with the majority of respondent fathers in the middle adult category (41 - 60). Some respondents also live in urban areas. Based on education, most respondents have junior high school education. Then, the average respondent is the eldest child who comes from a small family with an income of Rp1,000,000 - Rp5,000,000 per month. Then, most of the respondents' fathers are Sundanese. Some of the respondents' fathers are graduates, working as private employees.

Male respondents were found to be better in terms of self-regulation and better mental health than female respondents. Then, the more mature the father's age is also related to good parenting practices. Mental health is also related to education level. In addition, self-control is significantly negative related to problematic social media use and mental health. In addition, it was also found that parenting practices significantly negative affect mental health and self-control.

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