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Role of social media in child protection: Opportunities and risks

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Background: Social media is now a critical component in child protection, and it also poses opportunities as well as dangers. This study explored how digital media assists in child protection through raising awareness, facilitating reporting, and establishing support networks. Meanwhile, social media exposes children to various risks like cyberbullying, online exploitation, and privacy invasion.

Method: The study relied on secondary data, applying scholarly journals, reports, and case studies to examine social media's strengths and weaknesses in child protection. The approach incorporates a systematic review of the literature available, prioritizing studies by reputable organizations such as UNICEF, WHO, and child protection agencies. Thematic analysis is applied to highlight prominent patterns and trends regarding the effect of social media on children's safety. The research stratified its findings into three broad sections: (1) social media as intervention and advocacy tool, (2) risks of online child exploitation, and (3) how to reduce harm while amplifying the benefits.

Results: The research shows that, as much as social media is doing a wonderful job in advancing child protection initiatives, the presence of regulatory challenges and low levels of digital literacy undermines its general performance. To address these problems, a concerted effort between policymakers, social media platforms, and child protection agencies is necessary.

Conclusion: The research calls for an increased degree of digital safety laws and parental educational programs to advance a balanced and secure online culture for children.

Keywords: Child protection, social networking websites, cybercrime, online safety, internet abuse.