

DIGITAL PARENTING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD: VALUE INTERNALIZATION AS PRIMARY SOCIALIZATION

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ABSTRACT

Development of digital technology has significantly transformed early childhood socialization patterns, where digital media has become an integral part of children's social environment. This study aims to examine the role of digital parenting as a primary agent of socialization in the internalization of values among early childhood in the digital era. The research employs a qualitative approach using library research methods by analyzing relevant literature from scientific journals, books, and academic documents. The findings indicate that digital technology has both positive and negative impacts on children's development, particularly in terms of learning opportunities and risks such as reduced social interaction and emotional development challenges. The study reveals that the family, as the primary agent of socialization, plays a crucial role in guiding children's value internalization through digital parenting practices. Digital parenting involves supervision, mediation, and active engagement in children's digital activities, enabling the instillation of values such as responsibility, discipline, and digital ethics. The effectiveness of digital parenting is strongly influenced by parental digital literacy and communication within the family. Overall, digital parenting is not merely a form of control but a transformation of the family's socialization function in the digital era, contributing to children's social, emotional, and moral development.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has brought significant changes to various aspects of life, including parenting patterns for early childhood. The widespread use of gadgets and internet access enables children to interact not only within real social environments but also in digital spaces. This condition positions early childhood as a generation growing up alongside technology, where their learning and socialization processes are increasingly influenced by digital media. However, uncontrolled use of

digital technology may lead to various risks, such as gadget addiction, exposure to inappropriate content, and disruptions in children's social and emotional development (Ulfah et al., 2021). In line with this, the increasing exposure of children to the digital ecosystem requires appropriate parental guidance, as digital media can support learning processes while also posing developmental risks if not managed wisely (Hill et al., 2016; Munzer et al., 2026).

These changes require adjustments in parenting patterns, leading to the emergence of the concept of digital parenting. Digital parenting refers to parental involvement in guiding, assisting, and supervising children's digital activities wisely. Beyond functioning as supervision, digital parenting also contributes to children's character formation through the internalization of values such as responsibility, digital communication ethics, self-control, and the ability to filter information. These values are developed through daily digital interactions between parents and children, including communication about online activities, guidance in media use, content selection, and parental role modeling in technology use. Therefore, digital parenting cannot be understood merely as an effort to limit screen time or supervise technology use, but also as a process of value internalization, character building, and the development of digital citizenship in children (Modecki et al., 2022). In this context, parents' digital literacy becomes an important factor in the successful implementation of digital parenting (Maulidian et al., 2025; Mustika et al., 2025). Parenting patterns also play an important role in shaping children's morals and behavior, as value internalization is influenced by the consistency and context of parental guidance within the family environment (Sari & Marnelly, 2024).

Nevertheless, studies on digital parenting have generally focused more on controlling children's use of technology rather than positioning it as part of the primary socialization process in value internalization. In fact, digitalization has transformed the process of primary socialization, where the transmission of values is no longer limited to direct family interactions but is also influenced by digital platforms that shape children's behavior and social identity (Evren, 2025). Based on this phenomenon, this study aims to examine digital parenting as a primary socialization agent in the internalization of values among early childhood in the digital era, as well as to understand the transformation of family socialization processes within the context of technological development.

2. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using a literature study (library research) method. This approach was chosen because the research focuses on examining concepts and theories related to digital parenting as a primary socialization agent in the internalization of values among early childhood in the digital era through various relevant written sources. The study was conducted from March to April 2025 using online academic databases and digital library sources.

The data used in this study consist of secondary data obtained from scientific journals, books, and official documents relevant to the research topic. Literature searches were conducted through academic databases such as Google Scholar, SINTA, Scopus, and ScienceDirect using keywords including digital parenting, primary socialization, value internalization, and early childhood in the digital era.

The literature selection process was carried out by identifying and screening sources based on relevance to the research topic. The inclusion criteria included literature discussing digital parenting, child socialization, and value internalization, published in credible academic sources within the last ten years. Sources that were irrelevant, duplicated, or lacked academic credibility were excluded from the analysis.

Data collection was conducted through documentation study by identifying, collecting, and reviewing selected literature sources. The collected data were then organized based on research themes and analyzed using qualitative content analysis to identify patterns, concepts, and relationships related to the role of digital parenting in the process of primary socialization and value internalization in early childhood. The findings were systematically synthesized to answer the research objectives.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The development of digital technology has brought changes to the patterns of socialization among early childhood, where digital media has become part of the social environment that influences the formation of values and behavior. Based on the results of the literature review, the use of digital technology among young children has an ambivalent impact, providing benefits in terms of learning while also posing risks if not accompanied by proper supervision. The negative impacts commonly found include gadget addiction, reduced direct social interaction, and disruptions in children's social and emotional development (Suryaningsih & A.E, 2021; Ulfah et al., 2021). This

condition indicates that digital technology cannot be separated from the socialization process of children, thus requiring the active role of the family as the primary environment. This is further supported by findings that early childhood development is influenced by integrated aspects such as education, parenting, health, and protection, which collectively contribute to the formation of children's values and behavior .

In relation to this, the family, as the primary agent of socialization, holds the main responsibility in guiding the process of value internalization in early childhood. The analysis shows that the role of the family is not limited to setting rules, but also includes habituation and modeling in daily life, including in the use of digital technology. Digital parenting, in this case, represents the actualization of the family's role in adapting the socialization process to contemporary developments. According to the study conducted by (Faila Shofa, 2022), parental involvement in children's use of technology can help shape more directed gadget usage habits and improve children's self-control in interacting with digital media. This is also supported by (Putri et al., 2025), who emphasize that digital parenting increases parental awareness in managing children's gadget use in early childhood. In practice, parents take on multiple roles such as educators, facilitators, motivators, and supervisors in managing children's gadget use, including setting time limits and guiding content selection to support children's development .

Furthermore, digital parenting serves as a means of contextual value internalization. Through interactions that occur during the use of technology, parents can instill values such as discipline, responsibility, and digital communication ethics. This process occurs through repeated interactions, allowing the values taught to become not only normative but also part of children's habitual behavior. Parental guidance in children's technology use helps them understand boundaries and develop awareness of appropriate online behavior, emphasizing the important role of parents in supporting value internalization in the digital era (Livingstone & Helsper, 2008). The process of value internalization is further strengthened through methods such as habituation, modeling, and storytelling, which are widely applied in early childhood education to build children's character (Jamilah et al., 2023; Nugroho et al., 2021).

From a theoretical perspective, the concept of digital parenting can be understood through the framework of parental mediation, where parents actively guide and regulate children's media use. Nikken & Schols (2015) explain that

parental mediation involves different strategies such as active mediation, restrictive mediation, and co-use, which aim to support children in developing safe and responsible media habits. This indicates that digital parenting is not only about controlling access to digital devices, but also about engaging with children to help them understand digital content and its implications.

In a similar vein, parental involvement plays a significant role in shaping children's screen time behavior and overall digital engagement. Lauricella et al. (2015) found that both parental factors and child characteristics influence the amount of screen time and the quality of media interaction among young children. This suggests that effective digital parenting requires a balanced approach where parents not only limit usage time but also consider the content and context of media consumption to support healthy developmental outcomes.

Additionally, the effectiveness of digital parenting is strongly influenced by parents' level of understanding of technology use. Parents with better understanding of the impacts of technology tend to be more capable of guiding children in selecting appropriate content and managing screen time. Research shows that parental digital literacy plays a significant role in creating a safe and educational digital environment for children Thufailah et al. (2024). Therefore, parents' ability to understand technology becomes a key factor in supporting effective socialization in the digital era.

However, the socialization process within families in the digital era also faces various challenges. One of the main challenges is the increasing intensity of children's technology use, which is not always accompanied by adequate parental supervision. This condition may lead to children being more exposed to digital media influences than to the values instilled within the family (Ulfah et al., 2021). In addition, the lack of parental awareness regarding the importance of guidance also becomes a factor that hinders the process of value internalization in children. These challenges are further influenced by factors such as limited parental involvement, technological understanding, and environmental constraints that affect the effectiveness of parenting practices (Nugroho et al., 2021).

Overall, the findings of this study indicate that digital parenting plays a strategic role as a primary agent of socialization in the internalization of values among early childhood in the digital era. Through active parental involvement, digital technology not only functions as a means of entertainment but can also be utilized as a medium for contextual value learning. Thus, the process of socialization within the family undergoes

a transformation that occurs not only through direct interaction but also through digital interaction as part of children's daily lives. The implementation of structured parenting programs also shows positive outcomes in strengthening parental roles and improving the quality of children's socialization processes.

Ultimately, this study highlights that digital parenting is not merely a form of control over technology use, but a strategic approach to transform the family's socialization role. By integrating value internalization, parental mediation, and guidance in screen time, families can optimize children's social, emotional, and ethical development in digital contexts. This underlines the importance of enhancing parental awareness, literacy, and active engagement to ensure that technology becomes a constructive tool for early childhood growth rather than a source of risk (Maulidian et al., 2025; Mustika et al., 2025).

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the literature review, it can be concluded that digital parenting plays a strategic role as a primary agent of socialization in the process of value internalization among early childhood in the digital era. The rapid development of digital technology has transformed family socialization processes, where the transmission of values no longer occurs solely through direct interaction, but also through digital interactions that have become part of children's daily lives. In this context, digital parenting functions not merely as a form of supervision over technology use, but as a relational parenting approach that emphasizes communication, guidance, assistance, and parental involvement in children's digital experiences.

Through repeated and contextual interactions, parents can internalize values such as discipline, responsibility, self-control, and ethical behavior in digital environments. This process is strengthened through habituation, modeling, and consistent communication within the family. Therefore, the effectiveness of digital parenting is strongly influenced by parents' digital literacy and their ability to build supportive relationships with children in navigating digital spaces.

Overall, this study highlights that the transformation of family socialization in the digital era requires parents to adopt adaptive and relational parenting approaches so that technology can be utilized as a constructive medium for children's character development and value formation.

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