



The Role Of Family in Shaping Social Values in the Digital Era

Khaeriyah^{1*}, Nurasia Natsir²

¹⁻²Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Administrasi Yappi Makassar, Indonesia

Korespondensi Penulis: nurasianatsir@stiyappimakassar.ac.id*

Abstract. *This study explores the vital role of families in shaping social values among children and adolescents within the increasingly dominant digital environment. Digital technology has transformed communication patterns and modes of cultural transmission, presenting new challenges for families in instilling core values while navigating technological influences. Using a qualitative case study approach, this research involved 15 Indonesian families from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. Data collection methods included in-depth interviews, observations, and media diaries to understand the dynamics of value transmission in digital contexts. The findings reveal that family communication patterns—whether conversation-oriented, conformity-oriented, or laissez-faire—significantly influence children's internalization of values. Effective strategies identified include parental digital co-learning, value-based guidance, and the promotion of critical media literacy. Major challenges include value conflicts between family teachings and digital culture, concerns over cultural preservation, and competition for children's attention due to immersive technology. Nevertheless, the study also found that families can strategically leverage technology to reinforce values through careful media selection, engagement in meaningful digital activities, and fostering intergenerational connections. In conclusion, while families remain crucial socializing agents, the successful transmission of values requires thoughtful adaptation of traditional practices to meet the realities of the digital age.*

Keywords: Digital era; Family; Social values

Abstrak. Penelitian ini mengkaji peran penting keluarga dalam membentuk nilai-nilai sosial pada anak-anak dan remaja di tengah lingkungan digital yang semakin mendominasi kehidupan sehari-hari. Teknologi digital telah mengubah pola komunikasi dan cara pewarisan budaya, sehingga keluarga menghadapi tantangan baru dalam menanamkan nilai-nilai inti sambil menavigasi pengaruh teknologi. Dengan pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif, penelitian ini melibatkan 15 keluarga Indonesia dari berbagai latar belakang sosial ekonomi. Metode pengumpulan data meliputi wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan penggunaan media diary untuk memahami dinamika transmisi nilai dalam konteks digital. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pola komunikasi keluarga—baik yang berorientasi pada percakapan, konformitas, maupun yang bersifat laissez-faire—memiliki pengaruh signifikan terhadap proses internalisasi nilai oleh anak. Strategi efektif yang ditemukan mencakup pembelajaran digital bersama antara orang tua dan anak, bimbingan berbasis nilai, serta penguatan literasi media kritis. Tantangan utama meliputi konflik nilai antara ajaran keluarga dan budaya digital, kekhawatiran terhadap pelestarian budaya, serta persaingan perhatian anak yang terbagi dengan teknologi yang imersif. Namun, penelitian ini juga menemukan bahwa keluarga dapat memanfaatkan teknologi secara strategis untuk memperkuat nilai-nilai melalui seleksi media yang bijak, keterlibatan dalam layanan digital yang bernilai, dan koneksi lintas generasi. Kesimpulannya, keluarga tetap menjadi agen sosialisasi yang vital, namun keberhasilan dalam mentransmisikan nilai-nilai memerlukan adaptasi praktik tradisional secara bijaksana terhadap realitas digital.

Kata Kunci: Era digital; Keluarga; Nilai-nilai sosial

1. INTRODUCTION

In the digital era, social values are undergoing significant transformations influenced by rapid advancements in technology and the pervasive presence of digital media. The way individuals communicate, interact, and perceive the world has shifted dramatically due to the influence of social networks, online communities, and digital content. This change has not only altered societal norms but also impacted the fundamental values that shape individuals'

behaviors and beliefs. As children and teenagers increasingly engage with digital platforms, the role of family becomes crucial in guiding them through this evolving landscape.

Families serve as the primary socializing agents, instilling values that are essential for navigating the complexities of modern life. In the context of digital technology, families are tasked with imparting values such as empathy, respect, and digital citizenship. Parents and guardians play a vital role in mediating their children's experiences with technology, helping them to develop critical thinking skills and discernment in evaluating online content. As children are exposed to diverse perspectives and cultures through digital media, the family unit must adapt to foster an environment that encourages healthy engagement with technology while reinforcing core social values.

Research Objectives

The primary aim of this research is to examine the influence of family in shaping the social values of children and adolescents within the context of digital technology. By exploring the dynamics of family interactions and their impact on value formation, the study seeks to highlight the significance of familial guidance in a rapidly changing digital landscape.

The specific objectives of this research include:

1. To investigate how families communicate and reinforce social values in the context of digital media.
2. To analyze the role of parental involvement in guiding children's use of technology and instilling ethical digital behavior.
3. To identify the challenges families face in conveying traditional values amidst the influence of digital culture.
4. To explore the opportunities for families to leverage technology as a tool for positive value formation and socialization.

By addressing these objectives, the research aims to provide insights into the critical role of families in shaping social values in the digital age. The findings will contribute to a better understanding of how families can effectively navigate the challenges posed by technology while fostering resilience, ethical behavior, and a strong sense of identity in their children and adolescents.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Family Socialization Theory

Family socialization refers to the process through which family members transmit values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors to children and adolescents. According to Berger and Luckmann (1991), the family serves as the primary agent for socialization, especially during the formative years of childhood. The family environment provides the initial context in which children learn social norms, develop moral reasoning, and internalize cultural values.

Traditional socialization theories, such as those proposed by Bandura (1977), emphasize the importance of modeling and observational learning within the family context. Children observe and imitate the behaviors of their parents and siblings, gradually internalizing the values demonstrated through these interactions. Parental communication patterns, disciplinary styles, and expressed attitudes significantly influence how children perceive and adopt social values (Baumrind, 1991).

In the Indonesian context, family socialization often involves cultural and religious dimensions that shape value transmission. Koentjaraningrat (2009) highlights how Indonesian families traditionally emphasize values such as respect for elders, communal harmony, and religious devotion. These cultural foundations create a unique framework within which digital influences are interpreted and mediated.

Impact of the Digital Era on Social Values

The advent of digital technology has profoundly transformed the socialization landscape. According to Turkle (2017), digital media has reconfigured social interactions, creating new spaces for identity formation and value development. Social media platforms, online games, and digital content expose children and adolescents to diverse perspectives, alternative value systems, and global cultural influences that may differ from those promoted within the family.

Research by Common Sense Media (2020) indicates that children between the ages of 8 and 12 spend an average of 4-6 hours daily on screen media, while teenagers spend up to 9 hours. This significant engagement with digital platforms raises questions about the diminishing influence of family in comparison to digital media as a socialization agent. Boyd (2014) argues that digital spaces represent "networked publics" where adolescents construct identities and negotiate values through interactions with peers and broader communities.

The digital era has introduced several challenges to traditional value formation. Studies by Livingstone and Helsper (2013) highlight concerns about online risks, including exposure

to inappropriate content, cyberbullying, privacy issues, and digital addiction. These challenges necessitate new approaches to parental mediation and family communication about values in digital contexts.

Parental Mediation in Digital Contexts

Parental mediation refers to the strategies parents employ to regulate, supervise, and interpret media content for their children. According to Valkenburg et al. (2013), there are three primary forms of parental mediation: restrictive mediation (setting rules and limits), active mediation (discussing content and values), and co-use (shared engagement with media). Research suggests that active mediation, which involves open communication about digital content and values, is particularly effective in helping children develop critical thinking skills and internalize family values.

Livingstone et al. (2017) found that parental involvement in children's digital activities varies significantly across cultural contexts and socioeconomic backgrounds. Factors such as parents' digital literacy, available time for supervision, and cultural attitudes toward technology influence the extent and nature of parental mediation. In Indonesia, research by Hendriyani et al. (2014) suggests that parents often employ restrictive mediation strategies, reflecting cultural emphasis on protection and authority.

Digital Citizenship and Family Values

The concept of digital citizenship encompasses the responsible and ethical use of technology. According to Ribble (2015), digital citizenship includes elements such as digital etiquette, digital rights and responsibilities, digital literacy, and digital security. Families play a crucial role in fostering digital citizenship by modeling appropriate online behavior and discussing ethical considerations related to technology use.

Research by Jenkins et al. (2016) highlights the importance of developing "participatory culture" skills, which enable young people to meaningfully engage with digital media while maintaining core values such as respect, empathy, and integrity. These skills are increasingly viewed as essential social competencies that families must nurture alongside traditional values.

3. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design with a case study approach to explore in depth how families shape social values in the digital era. The qualitative methodology is particularly suitable for this research as it allows for rich, nuanced exploration of family dynamics, communication patterns, and value transmission processes that might be difficult to capture through quantitative methods alone. The case study approach enables detailed examination of specific family contexts and provides insights into the complex interplay between family influences and digital media.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The research sample consists of 15 families residing in urban areas of Indonesia, specifically selected to represent diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, educational levels, and family structures. Each family included at least one child or adolescent (aged 8-17) who actively uses digital technology. The sampling technique employed purposive sampling to ensure the inclusion of families with varying approaches to technology use and parental mediation styles.

The sample distribution included:

- 5 families from upper-middle socioeconomic backgrounds
- 5 families from middle socioeconomic backgrounds
- 5 families from lower-middle socioeconomic backgrounds

Within these categories, efforts were made to include single-parent families, extended families, and nuclear families to capture diverse family dynamics.

Data Collection Methods

Multiple data collection methods were employed to gather comprehensive information about family socialization practices in digital contexts:

1. **In-depth interviews:** Semi-structured interviews were conducted separately with parents and children/adolescents to explore their perspectives on family values, digital media use, and socialization practices. Interview protocols focused on:
 - Family communication about values
 - Rules and boundaries regarding technology use
 - Parental mediation strategies
 - Perceived challenges and opportunities of digital media

- Experiences with value conflicts between family teachings and digital influences
- 2. **Family observation sessions:** Structured observation of family interactions during digital and non-digital activities provided insights into implicit value transmission, communication patterns, and actual (versus reported) mediation practices. These sessions were conducted in the families' homes to capture authentic behaviors in natural settings.
- 3. **Media diaries:** Participating children and adolescents maintained media diaries for one week, documenting their digital activities, content consumption, and reflections on values encountered online. These diaries served as conversation starters during follow-up interviews.
- 4. **Document analysis:** Family rules, schedules, and agreements related to technology use were collected and analyzed to understand formal value transmission structures.

Data Analysis

The collected data was analyzed using thematic analysis following the six-step process outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006):

1. Familiarization with the data through repeated reading and initial note-taking
2. Generating initial codes across the entire dataset
3. Searching for themes by collating codes into potential themes
4. Reviewing themes in relation to the coded extracts and entire dataset
5. Defining and naming themes to refine the specifics of each theme
6. Producing the final analysis with compelling extract examples

NVivo qualitative data analysis software was used to organize and code the data. The analysis focused on identifying patterns in family socialization practices, value transmission strategies, challenges encountered, and adaptations made in response to digital influences. Triangulation across different data sources (interviews, observations, media diaries) enhanced the validity of findings.

Ethical Considerations

The research adhered to strict ethical guidelines, including:

- Obtaining informed consent from all participating family members, with special attention to age-appropriate explanations for children
- Ensuring confidentiality through the use of pseudonyms and removal of identifying information
- Providing participants with the right to withdraw at any stage

- Securing data storage and protection protocols
- Obtaining approval from the university ethics committee before commencing data collection

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Key Findings

Family Communication Patterns and Value Transmission

The research revealed distinct patterns in how families communicate and reinforce social values in relation to digital media. Families generally demonstrated one of three communication patterns:

- a) Conversation-oriented families:** These families (6 out of 15) emphasized open dialogue about digital experiences and values. Parents regularly engaged children in discussions about online content, encouraged questions, and used digital situations as teachable moments. As one parent stated:

"We don't just set rules; we explain why certain behaviors online are important. When my daughter encountered cyberbullying on her class group chat, we discussed how online words can hurt just like physical actions, and what our family values say about treating others." Children in these families demonstrated stronger internalization of family values and greater ability to critically evaluate digital content against those values.

- b) Conformity-oriented families:** These families (7 out of 15) emphasized obedience to parental authority regarding technology use. Rules were often presented without extensive explanation, and children were expected to adhere to family values without questioning. A parent from this category explained:

"In our house, there are clear boundaries about what's acceptable online. We've taught our children that respect is non-negotiable, whether in person or online. They know we expect them to uphold our family values." Children in these families showed strong awareness of family expectations but sometimes struggled to articulate the reasoning behind value-based decisions when faced with novel digital situations.

- c) Laissez-faire families:** A smaller number of families (2 out of 15) demonstrated minimal explicit communication about values in digital contexts. Parents in these families expressed trust in their children's judgment or acknowledged limitations in their own digital literacy. One parent remarked:

"I honestly don't understand half of what they do online. I trust that we've raised them with good values, and they know right from wrong whether it's online or offline." Children

in these families showed greater variation in their integration of family values with digital behaviors, often relying more heavily on peer influences for online decision-making.

Parental Involvement and Digital Behavior

The study found that the nature and extent of parental involvement significantly influenced children's development of ethical digital behavior. Several key dimensions of involvement emerged:

- a) **Digital co-learning:** Families that approached technology as a shared learning experience (8 out of 15) fostered stronger value alignment between parents and children. In these families, parents expressed curiosity about their children's digital activities and participated in some aspects of digital culture. This approach facilitated natural opportunities for value discussion. As one adolescent participant noted:

"My dad asks me to explain TikTok trends to him. It's funny watching him try to understand, but it means I can talk to him when I see something weird or concerning online."

- b) **Knowledge asymmetry challenges:** Many families (11 out of 15) experienced tensions due to disparities in digital literacy between parents and children. Parents with limited digital knowledge often relied more heavily on restrictive mediation rather than guided instruction about values in digital contexts. One parent acknowledged:

"My children know more about technology than I do. Sometimes I worry that I can't guide them properly because I don't fully understand their digital world."

- c) **Value-based guidance:** The most effective approach observed across socioeconomic groups involved parents who focused on imparting values that could be applied across contexts rather than specific rules for each digital situation. These parents emphasized principles such as respect for privacy, critical evaluation of information, empathy in communication, and responsibility for digital actions. A 15-year-old participant reflected:

"My parents taught me to ask myself if I would say something face-to-face before posting it online. That simple question helps me think about how my words might affect others."

Challenges in Conveying Traditional Values

Families faced several significant challenges in maintaining traditional values amidst digital influences:

a) Value conflicts: Nearly all families (13 out of 15) reported instances where values promoted in digital media directly contradicted family or cultural values. Particular areas of conflict included:

- Individualism versus collective family orientation
- Material consumption versus moderation and gratitude
- Digital self-presentation versus authentic identity
- Immediate gratification versus patience and delayed reward
- A parent of teenage children observed:

"Social media promotes showing off wealth and appearances, which contradicts our family values of modesty and finding worth beyond material things. It's a constant struggle to reinforce our values when the online world celebrates the opposite."

b) Cultural preservation concerns: Families from traditional backgrounds (9 out of 15) expressed particular concern about preserving cultural and religious values. Parents worried that global digital influences were eroding children's connection to cultural traditions. One parent explained:

"Our cultural values emphasize respect for elders and community harmony, but online culture often promotes challenging authority and individual expression above all. We want our children to navigate both worlds without losing their cultural roots."

c) Temporal and attention challenges: Many parents (12 out of 15) reported that the immersive nature of digital media created practical obstacles to value transmission. Family conversations, rituals, and shared activities—traditional vehicles for value socialization—competed with digital devices for children's attention. A mother of three noted:

"Family dinner used to be our time to connect and share values through conversation. Now I'm constantly asking everyone to put phones away. The digital world is always present, competing with family influence."

Technology as a Tool for Positive Value Formation

Despite challenges, the research identified several promising approaches through which families leveraged digital technology to reinforce positive values:

a) Strategic media selection: Many families (10 out of 15) actively sought digital content that aligned with or reinforced family values. Parents researched and recommended apps,

games, and online communities that promoted prosocial behaviors, learning, creativity, and positive representation. A father shared:

"We found online gaming communities that emphasize teamwork and helping others. These games give us opportunities to discuss how cooperation and generosity matter in all aspects of life."

- b) Digital service opportunities:** Some families (6 out of 15) engaged with technology as a means to express values such as compassion and civic responsibility. These families participated in online fundraising, awareness campaigns, or digital volunteer opportunities. One adolescent participant described:

"Our family helps manage social media for a local charity. I've learned how to use digital skills to make a real difference in our community, which shows me that technology can be a force for good."

- c) Intergenerational digital bridges:** Several families (7 out of 15) created intentional opportunities for grandparents or elders to share traditional values through digital platforms. Video calls with extended family, digital documentation of cultural practices, and online family history projects strengthened intergenerational bonds while preserving cultural values. A mother explained:

"During the pandemic, we started weekly video calls with my parents where they teach traditional cooking or tell family stories to my children. Technology has actually strengthened our cultural connections in unexpected ways."

- d) Critical media literacy:** Families that explicitly taught critical evaluation of digital content (9 out of 15) empowered children to recognize value messages in media and assess them against family values. These families asked questions about content creators' motivations, discussed subtle messaging in advertisements, and encouraged children to consider multiple perspectives. A 14-year-old participant demonstrated this awareness:

"My parents taught me to ask who benefits when I see content online. Now I notice when influencers are trying to make me feel bad about myself so I'll buy something. Our family values say your worth isn't in how you look or what you own."

Analysis and Interpretation

The Evolution of Family Socialization in Digital Contexts

The findings suggest that effective family socialization in the digital era requires an evolution rather than abandonment of traditional approaches. The most successful families

adapted core socialization practices—such as modeling, conversation, boundary-setting, and consequential learning—to incorporate digital dimensions.

The research indicates that the fundamental role of family as a value-transmitting institution remains vital, but the mechanisms through which this transmission occurs are evolving. Digital media has not replaced family influence but has altered the context in which familial socialization operates. As one parent insightfully noted:

"The principles of good parenting haven't changed—children still need guidance, boundaries, and explanations. What's changed is the environment we're parenting in. We need to apply timeless wisdom to new situations."

This perspective aligns with Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, which suggests that child development is influenced by interactions between various environmental systems. The digital environment now constitutes a significant microsystem that interacts with the family system, requiring adaptive responses from parents and caregivers.

Socioeconomic Factors and Digital Mediation

The research revealed notable differences in how families from different socioeconomic backgrounds approached value socialization in digital contexts. Families with higher socioeconomic status often employed more active mediation strategies and demonstrated greater confidence in navigating digital environments alongside their children. These families typically had:

- More flexible work arrangements that allowed for greater supervision
- Higher levels of digital literacy that facilitated engaged co-use
- Greater access to diverse digital resources aligned with family values
- More extensive social networks for guidance on digital parenting

In contrast, families from lower socioeconomic backgrounds faced additional challenges, including:

- Limited time for active digital engagement due to work demands
- Digital literacy gaps that increased reliance on restrictive mediation
- Financial constraints affecting access to high-quality digital content
- Fewer social resources for navigating digital parenting challenges

However, it is important to note that socioeconomic status did not determine the effectiveness of value transmission. Several families with limited resources demonstrated remarkable creativity in adapting traditional value socialization to digital contexts, often drawing on strong community and extended family networks for support.

Gender Differences in Digital Socialization

The research uncovered notable gender differences in how parents approached digital socialization. Daughters more frequently reported restrictive mediation focused on protection, while sons described greater autonomy in digital exploration. These differences reflected broader cultural values regarding gender roles but sometimes created unintended consequences. As one mother reflected:

"I realized I was being much stricter with my daughter online because I worried about her safety. But by limiting her exploration, I wasn't teaching her how to navigate digital spaces confidently."

Families that consciously addressed these gender disparities created more equitable digital socialization experiences that prepared all children to apply family values across contexts.

Balancing Traditional Values and Digital Adaptation

A central tension observed across families was the balance between preserving traditional values and adapting to digital realities. The most resilient families maintained core values while acknowledging the changing context in which children must apply them. This adaptive approach involved:

- Distinguishing between fundamental values (the "why") and situational expressions of those values (the "how")
- Creating open dialogue about how enduring principles apply in new digital contexts
- Acknowledging the valid aspects of digital culture while maintaining critical perspective
- Involving children in establishing family guidelines for technology use

This balanced approach aligns with Kuczynski and Parkin's bidirectional model of socialization, which recognizes children as active agents in the socialization process rather than passive recipients of parental values. The digital context amplifies children's agency, making collaborative approaches to value transmission increasingly important.

CONCLUSION

Summary of Findings

This research has examined the complex role of family in shaping social values amidst the pervasive influence of digital technology. The findings confirm that families remain crucial socializing agents even as children navigate increasingly independent digital lives. However,

the effectiveness of family influence depends significantly on how parents adapt traditional socialization practices to address the unique challenges and opportunities of digital contexts.

The study identified several key patterns in family approaches to value socialization:

1. Open communication and active mediation strategies were associated with stronger internalization of family values and more thoughtful digital decision-making among children and adolescents.
2. Parents who focused on teaching broader value principles rather than specific digital rules better equipped their children to navigate novel online situations with integrity.
3. Families faced substantial challenges in conveying traditional values amidst contradictory digital influences, particularly regarding individualism, consumption, and identity presentation.
4. Socioeconomic factors influenced families' capacity for active digital mediation, though not necessarily the effectiveness of value transmission.
5. Strategic use of technology as a tool for value expression—through service opportunities, intergenerational connections, and critical media literacy—strengthened family influence in digital contexts.

These findings suggest that family socialization remains essential but requires thoughtful adaptation to digital realities. As one adolescent participant insightfully observed:

"My family's values are like a compass that helps me navigate online. The internet is full of different maps suggesting different routes, but our family values help me figure out which direction is actually right for me."

Implications

The research has several important implications for families, educators, and policymakers concerned with healthy child development in the digital era:

For families:

- Regular, open conversations about digital experiences create essential opportunities for value transmission
- Collaborative approaches to technology management better prepare children to apply values independently
- Critical media literacy skills are crucial companions to traditional values education
- Digital co-learning reduces knowledge asymmetry and strengthens parent-child communication

- Cultural preservation requires intentional digital strategies, not just restriction of technology

For educators and community leaders:

- Family education programs should address digital parenting across diverse socioeconomic contexts
- Support for parents' digital literacy development enables more effective value socialization
- Community initiatives can help bridge resource gaps for families with limited digital access
- Educational approaches should recognize and respect the cultural dimensions of digital socialization

For policymakers:

- Digital inclusion policies should consider how access affects families' capacity for value socialization
- Media regulation should support parents' efforts to create value-aligned digital environments
- Work policies that allow parental involvement in children's digital lives support healthy socialization

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This study provides valuable insights but has several limitations that future research should address:

1. The sample size was relatively small and focused on urban Indonesian families. Future studies should examine these dynamics across more diverse geographic and cultural contexts.
2. The cross-sectional design captured family practices at a specific moment. Longitudinal research is needed to understand how digital socialization practices evolve over time and affect long-term value development.
3. The study relied primarily on self-reported data and limited observation. Future research could employ more extensive ethnographic methods or digital tracking with appropriate ethical safeguards.

4. The research focused primarily on parent-child dynamics. Expanded investigation of sibling influences, extended family networks, and community factors would provide a more comprehensive understanding of value socialization in digital contexts.

Future research directions might include:

- Longitudinal studies tracking the relationship between early digital socialization approaches and adolescent value expression
- Cross-cultural comparisons of family adaptation to digital influences
- Intervention studies testing specific strategies for strengthening family influence in digital contexts
- Exploration of children's perspectives on navigating contradictions between family values and digital culture
- Investigation of how families balance cultural preservation with digital integration across diverse contexts

In conclusion, as digital technology continues to transform social interactions and cultural transmission, the family's role in value socialization remains vital but requires thoughtful adaptation. By understanding how families successfully navigate these challenges, we can better support the development of children who bring strong values to their increasingly digital lives.

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