



The Role of Parents in Supporting Early Childhood Social Development in the Digital Age: A Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRAK. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyintesis mengenai peran orang tua dalam mendukung perkembangan sosial anak usia dini di era digital serta mengidentifikasi kerangka kerja terintegrasi untuk pola asuh digital yang efektif. Studi ini menggunakan metode Systematic Literature Review dengan mengikuti pedoman PRISMA. Data dikumpulkan dari Scopus, EBSCO, dan Open Knowledge Maps menggunakan kata kunci peran orang tua, perkembangan sosial, anak usia dini, dan era digital. Setelah menerapkan kriteria inklusi dan eksklusi yang telah ditetapkan, sebanyak 25 artikel yang telah melalui telaah sejawat dan diterbitkan antara tahun 2019 hingga 2024 dipilih dan dianalisis menggunakan analisis konten tematik. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa keterlibatan orang tua yang efektif tidak hanya terbatas pada pengaturan durasi penggunaan perangkat, tetapi juga mencakup tiga peran yang saling melengkapi: sebagai pengawas, pendamping, dan pembimbing. Orang tua yang secara aktif memantau penggunaan teknologi, terlibat dalam aktivitas digital maupun luring bersama anak, serta memberikan arahan mengenai perilaku digital yang bertanggung jawab, cenderung lebih mampu menumbuhkan kompetensi sosial anak sekaligus meminimalkan risiko yang terkait dengan penggunaan teknologi yang berlebihan. Kebaruan penelitian ini terletak pada pengusulan kerangka kerja konseptual terintegrasi yang menyintesis bukti-bukti yang sebelumnya terpisah-pisah ke dalam tiga peran orang tua yang saling berkaitan tersebut.

Kata Kunci : Pengasuhan Digital; Anak Usia Dini; Peran Orang Tua; Perkembangan Sosial

ABSTRACT. This study aims to systematically synthesize current evidence on the role of parents in supporting early childhood social development in the digital era and to identify an integrated framework for effective digital parenting. A Systematic Literature Review (SLR) was conducted following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines. Data were collected from Scopus, EBSCO, and Open Knowledge Maps using the keywords parental role, social development, early childhood, and digital era. After applying predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria, 25 peer-reviewed articles published between 2019 and 2024 were selected and analyzed using thematic content analysis. The findings indicate that effective parental involvement extends beyond screen-time regulation to encompass three complementary roles: supervisors, companions, and mentors. Parents who actively monitor technology use, engage in shared digital and offline activities, and provide guidance on responsible digital behavior are more likely to foster children's social competence while minimizing the risks associated with excessive technology use. The novelty of this study lies in proposing an integrated conceptual framework that synthesizes fragmented evidence into these three interconnected parental roles, providing a more comprehensive understanding of digital parenting than previous studies.

Keyword : Digital Parenting; Early Childhood; Parental Role; Social Development

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INTRODUCTION

In today's digital age, technology has become an integral part of everyday life, including in the lives of young children. In today's digital age, social media has become a new tool for communication and information sharing, with the availability of high-speed internet, social media tends to reach audiences faster. The lack of regulation and ethics has led to the rise of abusive language and hate speech being a growing concern on social media platforms in the form of posts, replies, and comments against individuals, groups, religions, and communities [1]. School readiness can be used as a key target to support children's social, emotional, language, and multiple communication skills, particularly to promote equality for children in a democratic society [2]. This research intervention consists of a socioemotional learning paradigm. Children today are exposed to technologies such as mobile devices, computers and the internet from an early age, which affect various aspects of their development, including social development [3].

The use of a considerable amount of technology can bring positive impacts, such as access to information and learning resources, but also has potential risks for children's social development, such as a decrease in face-to-face social interaction and interpersonal communication skills. In many cases they are aware of the instructional potential of digital learning objects and are ready to carefully (in small increments) integrate these technologies in the programs of preschool educational organizations or in home education. Sadykova said In today's digital age, social media has become a new tool for communication and information sharing, with the availability of high-speed internet, social media reaches audiences faster, this brings new challenges and opportunities for parents in guiding their children, especially regarding social interactions that are increasingly influenced by technology [4]. Neitola revealed a significant relationship between children's social relationships at different points in time and the significance of parents' social networks for children's networks with peers [5].

Social development is one of the important aspects of early childhood development. At this stage, children learn to recognize emotions, interact with others, and understand social norms. This process is greatly influenced by their immediate environment, especially the family, which plays an important role in shaping children's character and behavior. Parents have the responsibility of directing their children to use technology wisely, so that technology can be a tool that supports, rather than hinders, children's social development. However, many parents still face challenges in balancing the use of technology for their children. Parents' lack of knowledge and understanding of the impact of technology on early childhood social development is often an obstacle in providing effective assistance.

Social media has become a new tool for communication and information sharing. The lack of regulation and ethics has led to the rise of abusive language and hate speech being a growing concern on social media platforms in the form of posts, replies, and comments against individuals, groups, religions, and communities [1]. Therefore, it is important for parents to understand how to best support children's social development in this digital era, with strategies that can balance the benefits of technology and the

risks it poses. This study aims to examine the role of parents in supporting early childhood social development in the digital age through a systematic narrative review.

The use of digital devices such as smartphones, tablets and computers has become commonplace in children's lives, even from an early age. While technology can provide extensive educational and informational benefits, excessive or undirected exposure can have negative impacts, especially on children's social development. Face-to-face interactions and interpersonal communication skills that are important in children's social development are often replaced by interactions with digital screens. Therefore, the role of parents in guiding children to use technology wisely is crucial to ensure that children's social development remains optimal. Zhou Attachment has emerged as a major topic of contemporary studies on children's social and personality development, with increasing recognition of the impact of attachment type on children's physical and mental health, personality development, and social relationships, although various factors determine the type of attachment in children, parental influence and role are the most important [6].

Early childhood social development is closely related to their ability to recognize emotions, interact with others, and understand social norms. According to Vygotsky's theory of social development, social interactions with parents and the surrounding environment are crucial in shaping children's character and social skills. In the digital era, this theory is relevant in understanding how exposure to technology affects children's social interactions and how parents play a role in shaping these interaction patterns. The role of parents as "co-regulators" in children's technology use is very important, as expressed in co-regulation theory which states that parents need to be actively involved in monitoring and directing children's use of technology. The role of self-regulation, negative affectivity, and home environment in the development of procrastination, recent studies investigated children's procrastination in relation to mindfulness, effortful control, negative affectivity, parenting, and socioeconomic status [7].

This research will conduct a systematic narrative review of the relevant literature on the role of parents in supporting children's social development in the digital age [8]. The workflow led to three factors that moderate changes in children's social attitudes over time: Communication about smartphones with mothers, provision of parental support, and shared use by parents. The implications of these findings are discussed in the context of existing literature, and the family and microsystems theoretical framework. Overall, this prospective study examines parents' key factors and strategies that can be used by parents to address one of the most difficult parenting challenges in the digital age. This research will identify effective strategies, challenges and approaches that parents can adopt to support their children's social development in the digital environment.

The purpose of this study is to examine the role of parents in supporting early childhood social development in the digital age. By understanding effective approaches as well as the challenges faced, it is hoped that this study can provide useful recommendations for parents, educators, and policy makers in designing appropriate

strategies to assist children's social development amid technological advances. The purpose of the following study was to describe the use of digital media (i.e., TV, cell phones, and Tablets), the presence of adults during these activities, and their relationship with language, motor, and social-emotional developmental milestones in the first years of life [9]. Children who have high social skills will find it easier to complete creative tasks, while children who have low social skills will experience obstacles in adapting and adjusting to the learning process [10].

The results of this study are the role of parents is very important in supporting children's social development in the digital era, not all parents have adequate knowledge about the impact of technology on child development. Lack of understanding and skills in managing screen time can hinder early childhood social development. Bierman reviewed developmental research emphasizing the importance of social-emotional learning, particularly self-regulation and learning approaches, in supporting young children's development [11]. While previous studies have explored parental mediation, screen-time management, and children's social-emotional development, these dimensions have largely been investigated independently, resulting in a fragmented understanding of parents' roles in digital environments.

Figure 1 presents the publication trend from 2019 to 2024, demonstrating a steady increase in research on digital parenting and early childhood social development. This growing trend reflects increasing academic concern regarding the influence of digital technology on children's development, while simultaneously highlighting the need for a more integrated understanding of effective parental involvement.

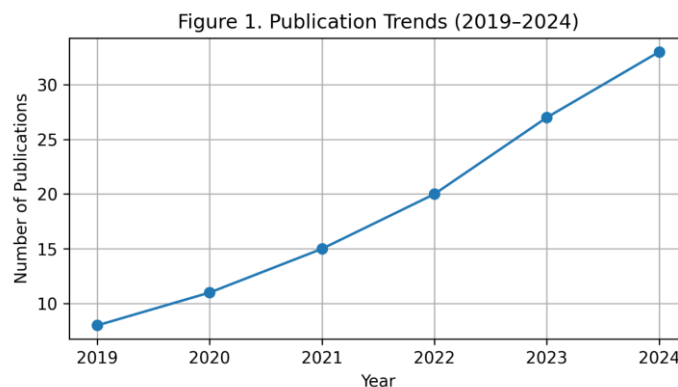


Figure 1. Publication Trend on Parental Role and Early Childhood Social Development (2019–2024)

Despite the increasing volume of research, no systematic review has comprehensively synthesized recent evidence into an integrated framework explaining how parents simultaneously function as supervisors, companions, and mentors in supporting children's social development in the digital era. This study addresses that gap by systematically reviewing studies published between 2019 and 2024 and proposing a holistic conceptual framework that integrates these complementary parental roles. The findings provide a stronger theoretical foundation for digital parenting research and offer evidence-based recommendations for parents, educators, and policymakers to promote healthy social development while maximizing the benefits of digital technology.

METHOD

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines [12]. Data were collected through a systematic search of peer-reviewed articles indexed in Scopus, EBSCO, and Open Knowledge Maps using the keywords *parental role*, *social development*, *early childhood*, and *digital era*. The search was limited to English-language articles published between 2019 and 2024. After applying predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria, 25 relevant studies were selected for analysis. The data were analyzed using thematic content analysis, involving article screening, quality assessment, data extraction, coding, theme categorization, and synthesis to identify recurring patterns related to parental roles in supporting children's social development in digital environments. The study design is illustrated through a PRISMA flow diagram, which describes the identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion stages to ensure transparency and reproducibility of the review process.

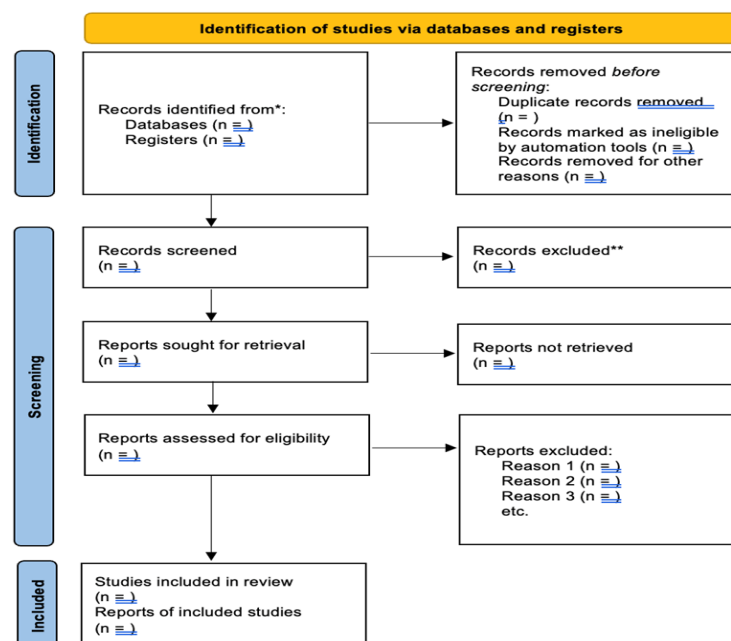


Figure 2. desain PRISMA

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The article search data that researchers used was through the Scopus Journal, at the beginning of the search or identification of articles in 2019 to 2024, researchers found 824,337 article data, related to the role of parents in supporting early childhood social development in the digital era, from the Ebsco Journal found 50 articles. After that the researchers deleted duplicate records as many as 250 articles, which were not eligible as many as 150, which were deleted again for other reasons as many as 20 articles. After that the researchers filtered 200 articles, with 50 articles excluded. Researchers again took 337 articles, and 30 articles were not taken, of all the remaining articles that were taken for eligibility, 42 articles remained and there were 10 articles that did not match the abstract, so the articles included in the researcher's review were

32 articles, of the 32 articles the researcher took 25 articles that were closer to the variables with the study that the researcher compiled according to the topic of the role of parents on early childhood social development in the digital era, using the Literature Systematic Review Approach or Systematic Narrative Review. To complete the citation search data, researchers used the PRISMA Diagram (Preferred Reporting Items For Systematic Reviews And Meta-Analyses).

Researchers used the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method with several data bases to obtain literature sources, namely Scopus, Ebsco and Open Knowledge Maps. The keywords used by the author in the search are "Parental Role" AND "Social Development" AND "Young Children" AND "Digital Era" with the inclusion criteria used are 2019-2024 which can be seen in Tables 1,2:

Table 1. Systematic Literature Review

Database Search	Keywords.
Scopous	"Parental Role" AND "Social Development" AND "Early Childhood" AND "Digital Era"
Ebsco	"Parental Role and Digital Era"
Open Knowledge Maps	"SocialDevelopment"

Table 2. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

No.	Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
1	Population	Early childhood 5-6 years	Children outside the early years or other age groups
2	Type of Research	Empirical, experimental, quasi-experimental or case study research examining parenting, social development, early childhood and the digital age.	Research that does not discuss the role of parents, social development, early childhood and the digital age.
3	Intervention Focus	Parental roles that can improve early childhood social development in the digital age and use	Games involving traditional tools that do not involve digital
4	Measured outcome	Measuring children's social development such as socialization and interaction with the environment as well as measuring the success of parental assistance to limit children's use of gadgets	Measuring outcomes unrelated to children's social development and digital influences
5	Language Availability	Articles available in Indonesian or English	Articles in languages other than Indonesian or English
6	Year of Publication	Research published in the last 5 years (2019 - 2024)	Research published more than 5 years
7	Publication Type	Journal articles indexed in Scopus, Ebsco and Open Knowledge maps databases	Articles published on blogs, informal websites, or other non-scientific media

The Role of Parents in Teaching Social Skills to Children in the Digital Age, based on the observation of several studies, some parents realize the importance of social skills in children in the digital age, but still face challenges in its implementation. The role of parents has been neglected for many reasons. The role has been overlooked or underestimated due to society's assumption that all women know how to do it [13]; an increasing emphasis that children influence their parents and are also influenced by them [14]; systems theory focused equally on the interaction of each family member with each other [15]; and research emphasis concerning how well children develop under certain circumstances [16]. Parents are seen more as conduits of such development than as active participants [13]. Having a theory that at least outlines the

parenting process will facilitate professional work with parents. It will provide another perspective to the interaction between parent and child by focusing the parenting process.

Gadgets as one of the sophisticated products in the digital era provide convenience and can support various human activities if used wisely, but if used without control, supervision and control can have a negative impact on adults and early childhood that can interfere with the development process, especially the development of moral intelligence which is central to other developments [17], Many parents feel that digital devices such as smart phones and tablets, can help children interact online, but direct communication skills and empathy are often less honed. Ansari in their study said The results showed that internet self-efficacy, self-directed learning, learner control, and learner style had a positive and significant relationship with readiness for online learning [18]. The program can also offer a platform to raise parents' awareness about a holistic approach to child development and its importance to school success. Incorporating multicultural activities into early childhood programs and environments can further assist parents in maintaining cultural ties while creating important local community connections [19]. This is demonstrated by the high amount of time children spend in front of television screens or cell phones, which reduces their opportunities for face-to-face interaction. Play is a key driver of children's cognitive and social development and is essential for educational success. However, in recent years, parents and schools have come under pressure to prioritize academic targets over play [20]. Supervision and Limitation of Technology Use suggests that parents have an important role in supervising and setting limits on the use of digital devices.

Parents who actively supervise and set rules regarding the use of technology tend to have children who are better able to interact socially in real environments. Conversely, parents who are less assertive in setting boundaries tend to have children who have more difficulty interacting socially in face-to-face situations. We analyzed national data on children aged 3-5 years from 2016 to 2020 ($n = 26,871$) to examine the association between key PECE domains (parenting relationships, home learning opportunities, safe and stable environment, and family routines) with being on track for school readiness, defined using a multidimensional pilot measure called "healthy and ready to learn". Weighted univariate, bivariate and multivariable analyses were conducted to produce nationally representative estimates [21].

Parents' efforts to foster empathy and cooperation in the digital age through activities that involve direct interaction, such as playing together, playing sports, or doing art activities. Observations show that children who are often invited to do collaborative activities tend to have higher empathy skills than children who are more often using digital to play alone. On the other hand, parents who frequently utilize technology for joint activities, such as video calls with family, are also able to introduce the concepts of empathy and cooperation through online interactions. Variance in children's self-control was significantly explained by changes in two parent-child relationship factors: attachment practices and discipline. These results suggest that addressing parental mental health may increase the efficacy of child-focused

interventions by promoting parental consistency in discipline and perceived attachment (i.e. parent-child closeness) [22].

Parental support in the development of communication skills in cyberspace, needs to be taught how to communicate properly in cyberspace. The results show that parents who provide children with an understanding of online communication etiquette help children become more skillful in interacting politely and respecting the feelings of others in virtual conversations. Children are also more likely to be able to carefully choose words for communication and be sensitive to non-verbal expressions using digital. It has been shown that social support is essential for parents, as social isolation and lack of social resources are critical variables that can contribute to inadequate parenting [23]. The availability and use of high-quality social support can minimize the negative impact of parental stress [24],[25]. Overall, social support networks are likely to influence parental resources to cope with parental stress [26],[27]. High social support reduces parental stress, which helps improve parenting [28]. This, social support is associated with maternal and parenting practices [29].

Challenges Faced by Parents in Supporting Children's Social Development in the Digital Age, Sekaran said the increasing academic load and access to digital media are considered as factors that lead to reduced interaction between parent and child pairs [30]. Such as the influence of children's social environment outside the home and extensive access to the internet. Many parents reveal that they are often overwhelmed by children's use of technology outside of direct supervision hours, in addition to some parents feeling limited in their knowledge of technology, which impacts the effectiveness of supervision. MacKinnon said the online survey (ensuring researchers were not involved) included questions about program eligibility and acceptability and pre/post self-report measures of mental health, parenting, positive coping, and child behavioral outcomes, parents often feel stress due to technology during childcare, because with optimal development children are able to live life in the future [31]. Father involvement significantly mitigated the negative impact of maternal parenting stress in Korea, while father's mental health (i.e., no depression) played a buffering role in the US. This study illustrates cross-cultural generalizations and culture-specific aspects of family processes, then discusses some potential theoretical and practice implications that would better support families in enhancing their children's social development [32]. Wilders & Wood said in their research that pedagogical and curriculum development shifted from play to work, with activities structured and led by adults [33]. These factors contribute to the child's early childhood education schooling, and build school readiness as an attribute of the child.

These findings contribute to our understanding of the role of parental burnout as a family environment factor that is detrimental to the positive functioning of children through adolescence through parents' reactions to their children's emotions and the children's own social competence. The results for the follow-up question, predicted all other variables besides social-emotional understanding (language and communication, and math). Background variables related to each other in patterns congruent with previous findings, such as socioeconomic status predicting overall outcome measures.

The results are discussed in relation to intervention fidelity, intervention duration, preschool quality, and the impact of background variables on children's developmental trajectories and life prospects [34].

CONCLUSION

This systematic literature review confirms that parental involvement is a key determinant of early childhood social development in the digital era. Parents who actively supervise technology use, establish appropriate screen-time limits, and engage in meaningful interactions with their children can maximize the benefits of digital technology while reducing its potential risks to children's social competence. The novelty of this study lies in proposing an integrated conceptual framework that synthesizes fragmented evidence into three complementary parental roles supervisors, companions, and mentors, in fostering children's social development in digital environments. This framework extends previous research by providing a holistic understanding of how balanced parental involvement supports healthy social development through the integration of digital and face-to-face interactions. These findings provide a theoretical foundation for future digital parenting research and practical guidance for parents, educators, and policymakers. Future studies should empirically validate the proposed framework across different cultural contexts and examine its long-term impact on children's social competence.

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