



## Digital Technology and Multicultural Parenting: A Case Study of Childcare Transformation in Pontianak

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### ABSTRACT

This study explores the impact of digital technology on childcare practices in Pontianak, a multicultural city in Indonesia. Employing a qualitative case study approach, the research involved purposively selected parents from six major ethnic groups (Malay, Dayak, Chinese, Javanese, Bugis, and Madurese). Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. The findings reveal that digital technology significantly shapes parenting behaviors, with cultural and religious values strongly influencing parental decisions regarding technology use. For instance, Malay parents prioritize religious content, Chinese parents focus on academic tools, while Javanese and Bugis parents adopt more flexible approaches balancing digital use with social interaction. The study highlights how multicultural backgrounds shape diverse patterns of adaptation and perception toward technology in parenting. These insights contribute to the development of culturally responsive childcare and education policies in the digital age.

**Keywords:** *Childcare; Digital Parenting; Multiculturalism; Pontianak; Technology Adaptation*

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### INTRODUCTION

The use of gadgets in Pontianak City has undergone significant changes over the past five years, especially influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic (Rachmaniah et al., 2023). The phenomenon has marked an increase in gadget use across various demographics, including children and adults, driven by the need for long-distance communication and information access. The percentage of the population aged 5 years and above using computers in Pontianak City from 2021 to 2023 (Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi Kalimantan Barat, 2024).

Excessive internet use among children has become a significant concern due to its potential negative impact on their psychological, social, and physical

well-being (Junida & Dwipa, 2024). While the Internet offers educational and social benefits, its excessive use can lead to various developmental problems. Excessive internet use can lead to psychological problems such as reduced empathy, emotional intelligence, and social skills. Children who spend more time online struggle with interpersonal relationships and show impatience and lack of listening skills (Trebešanin & Kopunović-Torma, 2024).

The increase in gadget use among children in Pontianak City has a significant impact on urban family parenting patterns (Panggabean, 2024). Technology has become a tool used by parents in parenting, replacing some of the physical and social interactions that used to occur. Children tend to spend more time in the virtual world through gadgets than interacting directly with peers or family, impacting their language development and social independence (Maulidiyah et al., 2024). This has led to changing parenting patterns, where parents feel that technology can help in their children's education, but at the same time, technology reduces closeness and direct interaction.

As a multicultural city, Pontianak City is known as a city with a heterogeneous population composition consisting of various ethnic groups such as Malay, Dayak, Chinese, Javanese, Bugis, and others. Parenting in the context of a culturally, religiously and ethnically diverse urban society is very important (Gatwiri & Anderson, 2020). Different cultural values can strongly influence parenting patterns (Keller et al., 2011; Graf et al., 2014). Each ethnic group in Pontianak, for example, has a distinctive concept of parenting that their social background and beliefs can influence. This study explores how technology mediates and changes their traditional parenting patterns. Moreover, the presentation of gadget users among children aged more than five years has increased recently (Lukitowati & Hanum, 2023).

High gadget use leads to individualization and social isolation (Panggabean et al., 2024). Children in Pontianak, as in other big cities, prefer playing games or watching videos through gadgets rather than participating in social activities in the physical environment. In addition, the disparity in access to technology between families from different economic backgrounds creates inequalities in children's education and development. Children from better-off families have more opportunities to access quality digital devices, while children from less well-off families need to be included in utilizing technology for education.

In addition, the influence of globalization through digital media is changing perceptions and values in urban families (Riska et al., 2024). Children are exposed to outside cultures that influence their behaviour and ways of thinking, which are often different from traditional family values. These changes see technology and urbanization transforming parenting, with parents needing to strike a balance between maintaining local cultural identity and responding to global influences. Children's well-being is also affected, with

health risks such as sleep disturbances and lack of physical activity resulting from too much time spent in front of screens (Putimtseva, 2024).

Studies of parenting children with digital technology in the modern era have been conducted by several other researchers, such as Jewbwab et al. in 2019 with the title "Parenting Kids in the Age of Screens, Social Media, and Digital Devices", which explores parents and children interacting with digital technology in the modern era. Parenting becomes more complex with gadgets and social media. The research includes a national survey in the United States and is relevant to understanding global trends in digital parenting (Jewwab et al., 2019). Similar research was conducted by Wu Qi in 2023, who found resilience and strength needed by caregivers in facing the challenges of caregiving, especially in the urban context and the use of technology, with the research title "Strength and Resilience for Kinship Caregivers Raising Children: A Scoping Review" (Wu et al., 2023). Other research results explore the implementation of child-friendly city policies in Indonesia. They are relevant to the research theme in the context of policy and caregiving in urban environments found by Sos and several other researchers (Susetyo et al., 2021). Other findings were found by Soliman and colleagues in 2021 on adolescent parenting practices in Indonesia with a focus on socio-demographic influences relevant to the dynamics of parenting in big cities (Soliman et al., 2021) as well as research by Suratni and colleagues in 2023, which focused on health issues in the context of parenting and socio-economic factors affecting parenting in Indonesia (Susatri, 2023).

The research offers significant novelty compared to previous studies by focusing on the local context of Pontianak City, which has yet to be specifically studied in studies on technology and parenting. Most parenting-related research in Indonesia is national or based on other major cities such as Jakarta, Surabaya, or Yogyakarta. At the same time, Pontianak has different dynamics in terms of local culture, urban development, and access to technology. Therefore, this research provides unique insights into how Pontianak's urban communities adopt and adapt to technology in childcare, including the challenges and opportunities they face in maintaining a balance between technology and traditional values. Moreover, the protection of children has yet to be well guaranteed which brings risks and makes children's education neglected (Junida et al., 2023). This focus makes the findings more contextual and relevant for local communities that have yet to be represented in existing studies.

Another novelty is the interdisciplinary analysis between urban anthropology, technology and parenting, which has yet to be comprehensively addressed in previous studies. Technology, especially gadgets, has become an integral part of parenting in urban environments. However, how this technology affects patterns of social interaction and child development has yet to be fully explored in the Indonesian context. Providing a more in-depth analysis of the impact of technology on parent-child relationships in the digital age, especially in a developing society such as Pontianak. This research can help enrich the literature on the influence of urbanization and modernization in the

context of parenting, thus contributing significantly to the broader study of urban anthropology. Moreover, research with multicultural studies in urban areas such as Pontianak City provides a rich perspective to understand how technology affects the dynamics of parenting.

Thus, this study aims to explore and analyze the impact of digital technology, especially the use of gadgets, on the dynamics of parenting in the urban environment of Pontianak, adopting technology in the parenting process. The findings also explore how the use of digital technology affects parenting patterns in a multicultural society by analyzing how different cultural, religious, and ethnic backgrounds affect the acceptance and utilization of technology in parenting.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Digital Technology in Education and Parenting*

Digital technology has led to significant transformations in the fields of education and parenting. Research shows that the use of digital technologies, including computers, cell phones, and other mobile devices, can affect children's cognitive and social development and attitudes towards learning and social interaction. For example, a study by Eng and Balanskat shows that the application of information and communication technology (ICT) can improve children's academic achievement, particularly in low-performing students and those with special educational needs.

However, this positive impact is spread unevenly. Differences in technology acceptance between parents and educators may affect the effectiveness of technology in supporting children's learning. Factors such as educators' digital competencies, individual characteristics, and support from educational institution leadership contribute to educational institutions' digital capacity.

### *The Impact of Social Media Use on Children's Identity Development*

Social media has become a crucial instrument for children and adolescents in developing their self-identity. Research shows that interactions on social media allow children to express themselves and develop identity through social interactions with peers. The feedback received, both positive and negative, can affect children's self-esteem and self-concept.

In a broader context, social media has a significant role in the formation of children's social identities and behaviour. Children and adolescents tend to conform to social expectations on social media platforms, which can influence their behaviour in interactions both offline and online. This is important to consider in the context of a multicultural society in Pontianak, where cultural norms and values from different ethnic groups may shape different patterns of interaction online.

### *Parenting in a Multicultural City and its Challenges and Adaptations*

Pontianak, as a multicultural city, presents unique parenting challenges. Studies on multicultural education in Indonesia show that the main challenge is how parents and educators can integrate local cultural values with rapid technological developments. In this context, parenting and education approaches that value diversity while remaining responsive to technological advances are needed.

Hoon (2013) states that multicultural education in Indonesia often focuses on developing tolerance and understanding between ethnic groups. However, the influence of digital technology, which needs to be matched by adequate digital literacy, can lead to social fragmentation and exclusion among children. Therefore, strategies designed to integrate technology into parenting and education should consider the local cultural context.

### *Dynamics of Family Interaction in the Digital Age*

The presence of digital technology has also changed the way parents interact with their children. Parents who are skilled in technology tend to use technology as a tool in their children's education. However, excessive use of technology by parents and children can reduce direct interaction within the family, which impacts the overall quality of family relationships.

Previous research has shown that children who frequently use digital devices tend to experience changes in interpersonal relationships, both in the context of family and with peers. This includes changes in communication patterns, duration of interactions, and attention given to the child. Technology utilization can also be a source of conflict within the family, especially when parents do not have an adequate understanding of healthy technology use.

## **METHODS**

This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study method to explore the influence of digital technology on parenting practices in the multicultural context of Pontianak City, Indonesia. Through a phenomenological perspective, the research sought to uncover the lived experiences and interpretations of parents from diverse ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds regarding their use and perception of digital technology in childcare.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure representation from six prominent ethnic groups in Pontianak: Malay, Dayak, Chinese, Javanese, Bugis, and Madurese. A total of 18 parents participated in the study, with each ethnic group represented by three individuals who met the inclusion criteria of having children aged 4 to 12 years and having resided in Pontianak for at least five years. These criteria ensured the participants were embedded in the local cultural and urban parenting environment.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews guided by semi-structured questions to explore parenting values, routines, and digital habits. In



addition to interviews, the researcher conducted participatory observations within domestic settings and public family spaces to capture natural interactions involving the use of digital devices. Relevant documents, such as local parenting guides, educational materials, and policy documents on digital technology and childcare, were also analyzed to support contextual understanding.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Digital technology has caused significant changes in various aspects of human life, including in the way children are raised (Zhou et al., 2020). This research analyzes the impact of digital technology on parenting in the context of a multicultural society in Pontianak City. In big cities rich in cultural diversity, such as Pontianak, these changes become even more complicated due to the influence of the interaction of existing multicultural values. Pontianak is an Indonesian city characterized by significant ethnic, cultural and religious diversity, making it a perfect location to study how technology mediates social interactions within families.

Pontianak is recognized as a city with a diverse population, consisting mainly of Malay, Dayak, and Chinese tribes, as well as several other minority groups such as Javanese, Bugis, and Madurese. Such diversity results in unique dynamics in the methods of parenting and education of children by parents (Gatwiri & Anderson, 2020). The cultural background, religion and traditional values of each community group affect the way parents treat and adopt digital technology in parenting (Hrapczynski & Leslie, 2018; Zhou et al., 2020). This study aims to analyze how digital technology is utilized by parents from different ethnic groups in Pontianak and how multicultural backgrounds influence the acceptance and use of these technologies. The significant influence of various cultural values and widespread access to digital technology has driven changes in parenting patterns, particularly in multicultural urban environments such as Pontianak (Renzaho et al., 2010). The findings highlight the dynamics of parenting that include the acceptance, use and role of digital technologies in parenting, as well as the influence of multicultural backgrounds on the adaptation of these technologies (Gatwiri & Anderson, 2020; Tam & Chan, 2015).

### *Dynamics of Parenting in Pontianak City*

Initial research findings show that parenting patterns in Pontianak are inconsistent and vary widely between ethnic groups (Sapendi et al., 2023). The results of in-depth interviews with parents from six different ethnic groups (Malay et al.) revealed diverse parenting patterns in Pontianak. Parents from the Malay and Dayak ethnicities, for example, prioritize moral and religious education in parenting. They believe that religious values should be instilled from an early age to ensure that children develop a strong moral foundation. They prefer to allow limited playtime with electronic devices and utilize digital technologies, such as religious learning apps or digital books, that can instil

moral values. In this context, digital technologies such as religious learning apps (e.g. Quran reading apps) and digital storybooks about prophets and companions are chosen as tools in parenting. Malay ethnic parents generally limit the use of gadgets only at certain times, such as after Maghrib prayer or on holidays. For them, gadgets and digital devices function not only as entertainment tools but also as a medium to instil moral and religious values. Malay and Dayak parents tend to prioritize religious education and traditional values in their childcare.

In contrast, ethnic Chinese parents choose a different approach. Chinese parents emphasize the importance of formal education and academic achievement from an early age. This is reflected in their tendency to use educational applications and digital devices that support their children's learning outside the school environment. The use of digital technology is largely focused on educational applications that facilitate cognitive development in children, such as mathematics, science and foreign language learning applications. In interviews, many Chinese parents stated that they do not hesitate to invest funds in purchasing gadgets or software that supports their children's learning process. For example, parents often purchase iPad devices that come with paid learning apps. This parenting model reflects the use of technology as a tool to achieve academic goals and achievement.

Parents of Javanese and Bugis ethnicity show a higher level of flexibility in the application of digital technology in childcare. They tend to impose few restrictions on children's use of gadgets as long as the technology provides good educational or entertainment benefits. When using technology, as long as the technology provides educational benefits or healthy entertainment, observations show that Javanese parents often use YouTube as an interactive learning resource. They allow children to watch educational videos designed specifically for them, such as those covering general knowledge, science, or language learning. Bugi's parents, on the other hand, emphasize a balance between technology and social interaction. They tend to use gadgets as learning tools while still encouraging children to be involved in social activities, such as playing outdoors with peers.

Javanese parents' use of technology is more influenced by their openness to technological innovation, while Bugis parents tend to use technology selectively with close supervision. The Madurese community, on the other hand, continues to uphold local values in childcare and is more sceptical of the use of digital technology, especially gadgets and social media, which are considered to reduce parental control over children.

### ***The Impact of Digital Technology on Parenting Methods***

The influence of digital technology on parenting practices in Pontianak is very large. Its use has influenced interaction patterns between parents and children in the multicultural society of Pontianak City. Technology provides greater access to information about parenting and education, as well as offering tools to support children's development. The majority of parents interviewed

admitted that technology has made it easier for them to educate their children, both in cognitive and moral aspects. Most parents admit that technology makes it easier for them to access information about effective parenting, as well as giving their children access to a variety of educational content. However, technology also presents new challenges, such as the risk of dependency on devices, exposure to inappropriate content, and a decrease in constructive social interactions between children and their environment. Raising concerns regarding the risk of addiction and inappropriate content for children. Malay parents, for example, are more likely to use Al-Quran learning applications and Islamic story applications in raising children as part of efforts to instil religious values from an early age.

Malay parents, for example, utilize educational apps that focus on religion to support children's spiritual development. Applications such as Digital Al-Quran, prophet narratives, and Islamic educational games have become commonly used tools. They believe that using these applications can increase children's interest in studying religion interactively. However, they also acknowledge that spending excessive time in front of screens can reduce children's interactions with family and peers.

Chinese parents prioritize their children's academic achievements. They view technology as a tool that can improve children's academic performance in educational settings. Among Chinese parents, the use of digital technology is more focused on educational applications in mathematics and science. With math and science learning applications, parents feel their children can learn more efficiently and in-depth. These findings indicate that Chinese parents in Pontianak see technology as a means to accelerate children's cognitive development.

Some parents even stated that they trusted technology to educate their children more than teachers at school. However, they also worry that their children will miss opportunities to develop social skills due to excessive interaction with electronic devices.

Parents of Javanese and Bugis ethnicity show greater support for the use of technology for educational entertainment. They often set few restrictions on device use as long as the technology provides significant benefits to the child's development. For example, the use of learning videos on YouTube or educational game applications is considered an effective method for teaching basic science and language concepts. Parents from these two ethnicities tend to be more adaptive in using technology while still monitoring the content accessed by their children. They tend to use technology more often for educational entertainment purposes, such as learning videos on YouTube or interactive games that support children's learning process while playing. Madurese parents show a lower preference for the use of digital technology, with concerns about the negative impact of technology on children's social and emotional development.

### *The Role of Culture in Adaptation to Digital Technology*



Culture plays a crucial role in the adaptation of digital technology in childcare. The values upheld by each ethnic group greatly influence parents' choices and application of technology in childcare. Significantly influences parents' decisions regarding the type of technology to use and how it is implemented. Malay parents, for example, are more selective in choosing applications and digital content that are in accordance with the teachings of the Islamic religion. They avoid applications that contain violent content, pornography, or anything contrary to Islamic beliefs. They tend to avoid using gadgets at certain times, such as before praying, and guide children to use technology that supports religious values. In contrast, Chinese parents show a higher level of acceptance of various educational applications and generally prefer technology that can improve their children's academic performance.

These ethnic families show greater flexibility in their use of technology, especially to support their children's academic achievement. They do not hesitate to invest in software or gadgets that can improve their children's academic abilities. Dayak parents tend to apply a balanced approach to the use of technology. They appreciate the benefits of technology in parenting while retaining traditional beliefs that emphasize the importance of social engagement and family ties. Dayak parents often use digital technology to introduce children to local culture and traditions, such as through videos about traditional ceremonies or Dayak folklore. Even though they are more moderate in their use of technology, they still prioritize a balance between the use of technology and direct social interaction. They tend to direct children to use gadgets only at certain times and encourage more outdoor activities.

## **1. Normative Values and the Role of Religion**

### **a. Malay Parents**

Malay parents tend to align their use of digital technology with Islamic values. The selection of types of digital content and applications includes not only inappropriate content (such as violence or pornography) but also content that is contrary to Islamic ethics and morals. For example, they prefer applications that provide education about religious values, such as Al-Qur'an learning or daily prayer applications. This shows that technology is used as a supporting tool in instilling religious values. Parents tend to be more strict in limiting the duration of technology use to prevent negative impacts, such as dependence on games or entertainment applications that can distract children from religious and academic responsibilities.

### **b. Chinese Parents**

The use of technology in Chinese families is more focused on developing children's academic and intellectual skills. This is in line with Confucian values, which emphasize the importance of education and academic achievement. Therefore, ethnic Chinese parents are more open to technology that can accelerate their children's educational progress, such as applications for language learning, mathematics and science. They tend to view technology as a means to achieve better academic outcomes, as evidenced by increasing

investment in digital tools that support education. Monitoring of content still applies, but is more flexible if the content has educational value.

c. Dayak Parents

Dayak parents adopt a more adaptive approach to technology while still maintaining traditional values. Priority is given to a balance between the use of technology and social interaction, reflecting cultural values by emphasizing the importance of social relationships and family ties. Technology is used not to replace social interaction but to maintain local culture. For example, children are introduced to traditional ceremonies, folklore or local wisdom through digital videos or applications that present educational content about Dayak culture. Therefore, technology is considered a tool that supports the preservation of cultural identity.

## **2. Perspectives on Education and the Function of Technology**

Parents of the three ethnicities show differences in their perspectives regarding education and the function of technology. Malay and Dayak parents tend to be more cautious in their use of technology, arguing that social interaction and direct teaching are still more important. In contrast, Chinese parents have a stronger orientation towards results, viewing technology as a tool to improve their children's academic competence.

Malay parents tend to choose technology that introduces religious values interactively, such as Islamic narratives that can be accessed through certain applications. On the other hand, Chinese parents tend to prefer formal education applications such as online tutorials and learning platforms that are integrated with the school curriculum.

Dayak parents pay special attention to cultural education. They strive to maintain a balance between modern education and cultural education by utilizing digital technology to study history and traditions, which are only sometimes included in the formal curriculum.

## **3. Balancing Technology and Social Interaction**

In Dayak culture, a strong emphasis is placed on the importance of social relationships and direct interaction with family and community. Therefore, Dayak parents tend to limit their children's screen time and encourage greater participation in social and community activities. For example, they prefer outdoor activities such as traditional games or family activities that do not involve digital technology. In contrast, in Chinese culture, the use of technology is not only for formal education but also to increase social interaction in the digital world. Children tend to participate in online study groups or discussion platforms that facilitate interactions with peers virtually.

## **4. Differences in Attitudes towards the Regulation of Time to Use Technology**

Cultural values strongly influence time regulations for technology use. Malay parents are more strict in limiting the duration of technology use,

especially at times that are considered crucial for religious or social activities. For example, the use of electronic devices is limited before prayer times or when gathering with family. Chinese parents are more adaptive in determining when to use technology as long as it supports the child's academic progress. They are not too worried about the duration of gadget use by children as long as the desired results are achieved. Meanwhile, Dayak parents tend to choose a balanced time approach. Elderly Dayak users tend to choose a balanced time approach. The use of digital technology is regulated with strict provisions, namely that it is only permitted in the evening after completing all school work and other assignments and does not interfere with time for direct social interaction.

### **5. Implications for Designing Digital Education Programs**

These differences in approaches suggest that digital education programs must be designed with cultural context in mind. Content that is in line with cultural and religious values and social norms will be more accepted by the community. For example, educational apps for the Malay community may need to include Islamic content that conforms to religious principles. For the Chinese community, the app could be focused on deeper academic learning. For Dayak communities, app designs can include local cultural content and traditional knowledge that allows children to stay connected to their cultural heritage through digital technology.

### **6. Multicultural Adaptation in Digital Parenting**

The unique culture of Pontianak forms a distinctive pattern of adaptation in the application of digital technology in child care. These findings also show that the multicultural background in Pontianak has encouraged unique adaptation patterns in the use of technology for childcare. Parents from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds exchange information and parenting practices, ultimately resulting in cross-cultural parenting patterns. Pontianak's ethnic and religious diversity facilitates the exchange of information and the adoption of cross-cultural parenting practices. For example, Malay parents living in Chinese-majority communities are more open to the use of academic learning applications, tending to be more accepting of the use of academic learning applications. Meanwhile, Chinese parents in Dayak-majority environments consider local values more in the application of technology and are more considerate about integrating local values into their child's upbringing. Shows that cross-cultural exchange in Pontianak influences parents' adoption and adaptation of technology in childcare practices.

In addition, parents' perceptions of the risks and benefits of technology are influenced by cultural background. Javanese parents, for example, show lower levels of concern about the negative impacts of technology compared to Malay and Dayak parents. They especially emphasized the potential of technology as a facilitator of children's education, considering it an important instrument in the learning process at home. Bugis and Madurese parents tend to focus more on the potential of technology as a means to support children's education. They

argue that technology can disrupt the development of traditional values that have been inherited.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that digital technology has significantly influenced parenting practices in the multicultural context of Pontianak City. The findings reveal that ethnic, cultural, and religious values strongly shape parents' preferences, choices, and attitudes toward the use of digital technology in childcare. Malay and Dayak parents tend to emphasize moral and religious education, using digital tools selectively and aligning them with spiritual values. Chinese parents prioritize academic achievement, investing in educational technologies to support formal learning. Javanese and Bugis parents show greater flexibility by integrating technology for educational entertainment, while maintaining social interaction. Madurese parents remain cautious, upholding traditional values and expressing skepticism toward excessive digital exposure.

Moreover, the study shows that multiculturalism encourages cross-cultural adaptation in digital parenting. Parents living in ethnically mixed communities adopt practices from other groups, leading to hybrid parenting strategies. Cultural background also influences how parents perceive risks and benefits related to technology, with variations in screen-time regulation, application selection, and educational goals.

These insights underline the importance of designing culturally responsive parenting strategies and digital education programs that respect and integrate local values. In multicultural urban settings like Pontianak, effective parenting policies must account for cultural diversity to ensure that technology enhances – rather than undermines – children's development.

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