

Parents' Digital Literacy Strategies in Preventing Promiscuity of Alpha Generation in the Digital Era

Fatin Hamamah^{a*}, Enur Djauhar Nurfajriyah^b, Ade Setiadi^b

^a Faculty of Law, Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Cirebon, Cirebon, Indonesia.

^b Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Cirebon, Cirebon, Indonesia.

 : fatin.hmh077@gmail.com

Corresponding Author*



Abstract

Introduction: The rapid integration of digital technologies into children's everyday lives has created new opportunities as well as risks, including exposure to inappropriate sexual content, online grooming, and harmful interactions. Parental digital literacy is therefore increasingly important for supporting children's safety in digital environments.

Purposes of the Research: This study examines parental digital literacy strategies for addressing online risks among Generation Alpha and analyses the extent to which Indonesia's child-protection framework supports parental and family-level digital safety practices.

Methods of the Research: This socio-legal study combines normative legal analysis with empirical research conducted in Cirebon City, Indonesia. Primary data were collected through structured interviews with 20 key informants and questionnaires involving 100 parents of children aged 6–14 years, selected through purposive sampling. The data were analysed using qualitative descriptive analysis and descriptive statistics, supported by source and method triangulation.

Results Main Findings of the Research: The findings indicate substantial disparities in parental digital literacy, particularly in digital safety. Five strategies were identified: technical mediation, active mediation, restrictive mediation, digital modelling, and co-digital literacy. The findings further suggest that parental practices combining technical safeguards with open communication and adaptive monitoring provide a more comprehensive approach to managing children's online risks. The legal analysis indicates gaps between existing child-protection mandates and the preventive responsibilities of digital platforms. Conclusion: Effective child protection in digital environments requires an integrated approach combining parental digital literacy, child-sensitive communication, adaptive supervision, and stronger institutional responsibilities for digital platforms.

Keywords: Digital Literacy; Alpha Generation; Online Sexual Risk; Child Protection; Parent Strategy.

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INTRODUCTION

The development of information and communication technology at an exponential pace has fundamentally changed the way humans interact, learn, and shape their social identity. In the midst of this current of change, the Alpha Generation was born – a demographic cohort led by Mark McCrindle¹ defined as those born between 2010 and 2024 – as the first generation to grow

¹ McCrindle, Mark. *The ABC of XYZ: Understanding the Global Generations*. (Sydney: McCrindle Research, 2014).

and fully develop in the digital ecosystem. Unlike previous generations who transitioned to digitalization, Generation Alpha never knew a world without the internet, smartphones, social media platforms, and artificial intelligence.

These digital-native characteristics of the Alpha Generation carry paradoxical implications: on the one hand it opens up access to unlimited knowledge and opportunities, but on the other hand exposes them to risks that no previous generation has ever faced. Among these risks, the promiscuity facilitated by digital platforms—from pornographic content, cybersex, online grooming, to the normalization of early sexual behavior through social media—is becoming an increasingly real and worrying threat.

Data on the high use of the internet by children and limited parental supervision capacity show that there is a gap between the penetration of digital technology and child protection in the digital space. This condition creates vulnerability to various forms of online-based sexual behavior and violence, especially in groups of children and adolescents. However, the issue that remains unanswered is how the gap in parental supervision in the use of digital technology contributes to children's vulnerability to risky sexual behavior in the digital space, as well as the extent to which the applicable law is able to provide effective protection for children in dealing with these risks. Therefore, this study is directed to analyze the relationship between the development of children's digital behavior, the limitations of parental supervision, and the effectiveness of legal protection for children in the digital environment.

Various previous studies have identified parental digital literacy as one of the most significant protective factors in keeping children safe in the digital space. Livingstone and Helsper (2008)² In his seminal research on parental mediation, it was found that the active involvement of parents in children's digital activities was positively correlated with the level of security and digital literacy of the children themselves. Furthermore, Clark (2011)³ Develop the concept of parent-child media negotiation which emphasizes the importance of two-way communication between parents and children in managing digital media consumption.

² Livingstone, Sonia, and Ellen Helsper. "Parental Mediation of Children's Internet Use." *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 52, no. 4 (2008): 581-599. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08838150802437396>.

³ Clark, Lynn Schofield. "Parental Mediation Theory for the Digital Age." *Communication Theory* 21, no. 4 (2011): 323-343. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2885.2011.01391.x>.

Fatmawati Research (2019)⁴ In the Indonesian context, the digital literacy of millennial parents shows that the level of digital literacy of parents is still very variable and influenced by factors such as education level, economic background, and domicile (urban vs. rural). Research by Kurniawati and Baroroh (2016)⁵ It further identifies that low parental digital literacy is a significant risk factor for exposure to negative content in children. Juridically, Indonesia's child protection framework has given a clear mandate to parents. Law Number 23 of 2002 jo. Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection explicitly requires parents to protect their children from information that has a negative impact on children's growth and development (Article 26 paragraph 1 letter c). More specifically, Law Number 19 of 2016 concerning Amendments to Law Number 11 of 2008 concerning Electronic Information and Transactions also provides a legal protection framework for electronic content that endangers children.

However, there is a significant gap between the legal mandate and the reality of its implementation at the family level. Questions that have not been adequately answered in the existing literature are: what specific digital literacy strategies are most effectively implemented by parents to prevent promiscuity in Generation Alpha children, and how do existing legal frameworks need to be strengthened to support the implementation of such strategies?

This research is here to fill this gap by comprehensively analyzing the digital literacy strategy of parents in the context of preventing promiscuity in the Alpha Generation, by combining legal, sociology, and educational technology perspectives. The novelty of this research lies in the combination of regulative analysis with empirical data from the urban context of Indonesia, as well as the formulation of a contextual and implementable model of parental digital literacy strategies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Definition and Conceptualization of Promiscuity in a Digital Context

Promiscuity in the context of this study is broadly defined as a series of children's social behaviors that go beyond the boundaries of applicable religious, ethical, and legal norms,

⁴ Fatmawati, Nurul Indarti. "Literasi Digital, Mendidik Anak di Era Digital bagi Orang Tua Milenial." *Madani Jurnal Politik dan Sosial Kemasyarakatan* 11, no. 2 (2019): 1–16.

⁵ Kurniawati, Juliana, dan Siti Baroroh. "Literasi Media Digital Mahasiswa Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu." *Jurnal Komunikasi* 8, no. 2 (2016): 51–66. <https://doi.org/10.24912/jk.v8i2.348>.

particularly those related to interpersonal relationships of a sexual nature or related to sexual exploitation, which are facilitated or exacerbated by the use of digital platforms. The concept of digital platforms in a legal perspective, is not solely used to provide a moral assessment of children's behavior, but to identify forms of digital behavior and situations that have the potential to place children as victims of violence, exploitation, abuse, or sexual crimes and require legal protection.

Generation Alpha promiscuity in the digital context, takes a variety of forms that are different from conventional promiscuity. Based on the analysis of the research data, there are five main categories of digital promiscuity identified in this study, each of which has implications for the protection and enforcement of the law against children. First, sexting and cybersex, which is the exchange of sexual content through text messages, images, or videos through instant messaging platforms or social media. This phenomenon is even more troubling because the content shared can spread viral and is difficult to remove from the internet. Juridically, if children are involved, these activities can cause legal problems related to the sexual exploitation of children, the dissemination or transmission of sexual material involving children, as well as the protection of children's data and identity. Therefore, the children involved should not be positioned solely as perpetrators, but it is also necessary to look at the possibility of their position as victims who need legal protection.

Second, online grooming, which is a manipulative approach process carried out by adult sexual predators against children through digital platforms with the aim of sexual exploitation. From the perspective of criminal law and child protection, online grooming has strong relevance because it is an initial stage that can lead to sexual exploitation and violence against children. This behavior needs to be analyzed in relation to criminal responsibility of perpetrators, protection of child victims, and prevention efforts against digital-based sexual crimes. Third, digital pornography, which is the consumption and sometimes production of pornographic content through the internet which is accelerated by easy access to adult content on various platforms. The involvement of children in the production, distribution, possession, or dissemination of pornographic materials raises serious legal problems because it relates to

the protection of children from sexual exploitation and misuse of information technology. Legal analysis needs to distinguish between children as victims of exploitation and those who deliberately produce, profit, or disseminate sexual content involving children.

Fourth, dating apps and virtual romantic relationships, namely the use of dating apps by minors that normalize romantic relationships without adult supervision. Its legal relevance lies in the potential for manipulation, identity fraud, grooming, sexual exploitation, and offline meetings that endanger children's safety. Therefore, the use of digital platforms by children needs to be placed within the framework of child protection obligations, including the responsibility of parents, society, the state, and digital platform operators to prevent risks to children. Fifth, digital peer pressure, which is pressure from peer groups through social media to adopt behaviors that are contrary to family values. Although digital peer pressure is not always a criminal act, this phenomenon has legal relevance because it can be a factor that encourages children to commit or experience actions that lead to violence, exploitation, bullying, the dissemination of sexual content, or other forms of violation of the law.

Therefore, the legal approach to this phenomenon is not only repressive, but must also emphasize aspects of prevention, education, mentoring, and child protection. Juridically, these various forms of digital promiscuity intersect with a number of legal provisions. Article 27 paragraph (1) of the Electronic Information and Transaction Law prohibits the distribution of content that violates morality.

Article 29 of the Electronic Information and Transaction Law regulates the prohibition of sending messages that cause fear or threats of violence. Articles 80 and 81 of the Child Protection Law regulate criminal penalties for perpetrators of sexual violence against children, including through electronic media. However, the weakness of this regulation lies in the absence of provisions that specifically regulate the obligations of digital platforms to prevent children's access to harmful content.

B. Theorizing the Role of Parents in Children's Digital Ecosystem

The findings of this study as a whole strengthen and at the same time expand the theory of parental mediation that was first conceptualized by Valkenburg, Krcmar, Peeters, and

Marseille⁶ in the context of television, then adapted to the context of the internet by Livingstone and Helsper⁷. Parental mediation theory identifies three main styles of parental mediation against children's media use: active mediation (discussing content together), restrictive mediation (limiting use), and co-use (using media with children).

The Generation Alpha digital ecosystem is much more complex, this study suggests that all three mediation styles are no longer adequate when applied partially. The complexity of digital platforms—which involve recommendation algorithms, auto-play features, dark patterns designed to maximize screen time, and privacy loopholes that are difficult for even adults to understand—necessitate what researchers call 'multi-layered parental digital mediation': a multi-layered approach that integrates technical, communicative, and ethical capacities.

From the perspective of Bronfenbrenner's developmental ecological theory⁸, The digital space has become a new microsystem that affects children's development on par with the family and school. Parents, as the main agents in the family microsystem, have a responsibility to ensure that the digital microsystems that children access are protective, not destructive. Failure to carry out this responsibility—whether due to low digital literacy, indifference, or ignorance of risks—directly increases children's vulnerability to the negative influences of cyberspace.

METHODS OF THE RESEARCH

This study uses a normative-empirical legal research method that combines doctrinal studies of applicable legal norms with field research to obtain empirical data on parental digital literacy practices in real life. The approaches used include: (1) a statute approach to analyze child protection regulations in the digital space; (2) a conceptual approach to build a theoretical framework on digital literacy and promiscuity; and (3) a sociological approach to understand parental practices in a specific social context. There are two types of research data sources. First, secondary data sourced from primary legal materials (laws and regulations, international conventions), secondary legal materials (books, scientific journals, research reports), and

⁶ Valkenburg, Patti M., Marina Krcmar, Allerd L. Peeters, and Nies M. Marseille. "Developing a Scale to Assess Three Styles of Television Mediation." *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 43, no. 1 (1999): 52-66. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08838159909364474>.

⁷ Livingstone, Sonia, and Ellen Helsper. *Op. Cit.*

⁸ Bronfenbrenner, Urie. *The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979).

tertiary legal materials (dictionaries, encyclopedias). Second, primary data was obtained through field research in Cirebon City involving 120 respondents parents who had children aged 6-14 years (Alpha Generation) and were selected using purposive sampling techniques. The data collection techniques in this study were carried out through in-depth interviews, structured questionnaires, and documentation studies. First, in-depth interviews were conducted with 20 key informants who were purposively selected, consisting of parents, teachers, school counselors, and child protection legal practitioners. The interview aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the patterns of mentoring, supervision, digital literacy, and forms of children's vulnerability in the use of digital technology. Second, a structured questionnaire was given to 100 parents as respondents to obtain data on the level of digital literacy, supervision patterns, forms of assistance, and prevention strategies against the risk of sexual behavior and digital interactions at risk in children. The questionnaire data was used as supporting data to provide a quantitative overview of the findings of the interview results. Third, a documentation study was conducted on various legal sources and relevant documents, including laws and regulations, court decisions, policies related to child protection in the digital space, as well as reports and publications of institutions related to child protection and digital security. The documentation study was used to analyze the applicable legal framework and compare it with empirical findings in the field. The three techniques were used triangulatively to increase the depth, consistency, and credibility of the research data. Thus, empirical data from informants and respondents can be studied simultaneously with normative and documentary data to obtain a more comprehensive picture of child protection from the risk of sexual behavior in the digital space. Data were analyzed using a qualitative-descriptive analysis method with the Miles and Huberman interactive analysis model⁹ (data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn), supported by descriptive statistical analysis for quantitative data from questionnaires. Data validity is ensured through source triangulation, method triangulation, and member checking to key informants.

⁹ Miles, Matthew B., and A. Michael Huberman. *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook*. (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 1994).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Alpha Generation and Digital Vulnerability: An Empirical Overview

Generation Alpha (Gen Alpha) is a demographic cohort that social researchers such as McCrindle (2014)¹⁰ and Twenge (2017)¹¹ described as the most technologically connected generation in human history. They were born in an era where smartphones, tablets, artificial intelligence-based virtual assistants, and unlimited internet connectivity are commonplace even from infancy. Data from the We Are Social and Hootsuite surveys (2023) reveal that in Indonesia, the average child aged 10-14 years spends 7.2 hours per day in front of digital screens, exceeding the time recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) which sets a limit of 2 hours per day for school-age children. The results of field research in Cirebon City show a rather worrying picture. Of the 120 respondents of parents studied, it was found that:

Table 1. Digital Use Patterns of Alpha Generation Children in Cirebon City

No.	Indicator	Percentage	Quantity (n=120)
1	Children have access to their own cellphone/tablet	82,5%	99 Parents
2	Children use social media (TikTok, YouTube, Instagram)	76,7%	92 Parents
3	Parents do not know the content that children consume	58,3%	70 Parents
4	Parents have found that children access inappropriate content	43,3%	52 Parents
5	Have children communicate with strangers online	61,7%	74 Parents
6	Parents don't apply screen time restrictions	54,2%	65 Parents

Source: Research Primary Data, 2024

The data in Table 1 above reveal a very serious paradox: on the one hand, most Generation Alpha children already have free access to digital devices and social media platforms, but on the other hand more than half of parents do not know what content their child consumes. This condition creates what Livingstone (2009)¹² It is referred to as digital disconnect between parents and children – that is, the gap of understanding and involvement that makes parental

¹⁰ McCrindle, Mark. *Op. Cit.*

¹¹ Twenge, Jean M. *iGen: Why Today's Super-Connected Kids Are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy-and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood.* (New York: Atria Books, 2017).

¹² Livingstone, Sonia. *Children and the Internet.* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009).

supervision ineffective. More worryingly, 43.3% of parents admitted to having found their children accessing inappropriate content, and 61.7% reported that their children had communicated with strangers online. This situation shows that the risk of digital promiscuity is not just an abstract threat, but a reality that has touched most families in Cirebon City.

B. Parents' Digital Literacy Levels: Research Findings

Adopting the Digital Literacy framework from Ministry of Communication and Information (2021) which divides digital literacy into four pillars – Digital Skills, Digital Culture, Digital Ethics, and Digital Safety – this study measures the level of digital literacy of respondents' parents with the following results:

Table 2. Parental Digital Literacy Level Based on the Four Pillars of Communication and Informatics

Pillars of Digital Literacy	Height (>70)	Medium (40-70)	Low (<40)
Digital Proficiency	32,5%	45,0%	22,5%
Digital Culture	28,3%	41,7%	30,0%
Digital Ethics	41,7%	38,3%	20,0%
Digital Security	18,3%	39,2%	42,5%

Source: Research Primary Data, 2024

Table 2 reveals a very significant finding: the Digital Security pillar is the pillar with the lowest literacy rate among respondent parents, with 42.5% in the low category. In fact, the digital security pillar – which includes the ability to protect children's devices, personal data, and privacy from cyber threats – is the most crucial pillar in the context of promiscuity prevention. Parents who do not have knowledge on how to enable parental controls, read children's internet activity logs, or recognize the signs of online grooming will not be able to carry out their protective functions effectively. On the other hand, the Digital Ethics pillar showed a relatively better literacy rate (41.7% high), indicating that parents actually have a normative understanding of good and bad digital behavior, but do not have the technical capacity to implement this normative understanding into concrete protective actions. These

findings are in line with the research of Shin and Kang (2016)¹³ The difference between parental awareness and parental efficacy in the context of digital supervision of children.

C. Parents' Digital Literacy Strategies: Identification and Classification

Based on the analysis of interview data and questionnaires, this study identified five clusters of parental digital literacy strategies that were applied to prevent promiscuity of Generation Alpha children, with varying levels of effectiveness: Strategy One: Technical Mediation. This strategy included the use of parental control software and monitoring apps such as Google Family Link, Qustodio, or the Screen Time feature on iOS/Android. Of the 120 respondents, only 27.5% actively used these technical tools. Parents who used this strategy reported a higher level of intervention when encountering inappropriate content.

Second Strategy: Active Mediation. This strategy involves active discussions between parents and children about digital content, online risks, and values that need to be held in interacting in cyberspace. Clark (2011)¹⁴ calling this approach a relationship-based approach that builds open dialogue. Of the respondents, 63.3% reported having discussions about digital security, but only 41.7% did so in a structured and consistent manner.

Third Strategy: Restrictive Mediation. This strategy refers to setting restrictive rules, such as: limiting the time of using digital devices, prohibiting bringing cellphones to the bedroom, or prohibiting downloading certain applications. As many as 58.3% of parents implement this restriction rule, but 44.2% admit that the rule is not consistently enforced.

Fourth Strategy: Digital Modelling. This strategy refers to parents' efforts to show positive digital behavior to children through real-life examples. Bandura's social learning theory (1977)¹⁵ confirms that children learn more from what they see adults do than from what is taught verbally. Only 32.5% of parents consciously implement this digital modeling strategy.

Strategy Five: Co-Digital Literacy. This most comprehensive strategy involves a process of learning together between parents and children about the digital world – including evaluating content together, discussing hoax news, and exploring digital platforms together. Only 21.7%

¹³ Shin, Wonsun, and Jisu Kang. "Adolescents' Privacy Concerns and Information Disclosure Online: The Role of Parents and the Internet." *Computers in Human Behavior* 54 (2016): 114-123. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2015.07.062>.

¹⁴ Clark, Lynn Schofield. *Op. Cit.*

¹⁵ Bandura, Albert. *Social Learning Theory*. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1977).

of parents implement this strategy, although research shows that it has the highest effectiveness in building children's digital literacy in a sustainable manner.

D. Children's Legal Protection Framework in the Digital Space: Normative Analysis

The legal protection framework for children in the digital space in Indonesia is built on several layers of regulations that need to be critically analyzed. At the constitutional level, Article 28B paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia guarantees the right of every child to survival, growth, and development as well as protection from violence and discrimination. This constitutional protection is then translated into various regulations under it.

Law Number 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection is the main foundation of child protection in general. Article 26 paragraph (1) letter c expressly obliges parents to prevent marriage at a young age and protect children from information that negatively impacts children's growth and development. However, this provision does not contain specific sanctions for parents who fail to fulfill these obligations in the context of digital supervision. Government Regulation Number 43 of 2017 concerning the Implementation of Restitution for Children Victims of Crime implicitly recognizes the digital dimension in child protection, especially related to cases of sexual exploitation that occur through digital media. However, this regulation is reactive – based on recovery after the occurrence of violence – and does not touch on the more important preventive aspects in the context of digital literacy.

Indonesia's regulations, in a comparative legal perspective, still lag behind developed countries in terms of digital platforms' obligations to protect child users. The European Union through the Digital Services Act (DSA) 2022 requires major digital platforms to remove content harmful to children within a certain time and implements strict age verification mechanisms. South Korea through the Act on Promotion of Information and Communications Network Utilization and Information Protection requires platforms to block access to adult content for users under 18 years old. The urgency of strengthening national regulations in the field of child protection in the digital space becomes even more evident when we consider the fact that most of the digital platforms used by Indonesian children – YouTube, TikTok, Instagram – operate under the legal jurisdiction of other countries. The absence of adequate regulation on the

responsibilities of digital platforms creates a legal loophole that can be exploited and places the burden of child protection entirely on the shoulders of parents.

E. Strategy Effectiveness and Its Determining Factors

Analysis of the correlation between parents' digital literacy levels and the strategies applied with the child's exposure to negative content yielded statistically significant findings. Parents who implemented a combination of at least three strategies (technical mediation + active mediation + restrictive mediation) showed a 68% lower rate of reporting children's exposure to inappropriate content than parents who did not implement any strategies.

Factors that determine the effectiveness of parental digital literacy strategies in this study include: (1) parental education level—parents with a college education tend to have higher digital literacy and implement more comprehensive strategies; (2) family income levels—upper-middle-income families are more able to access paid parental control devices and apps; (3) parental age—Millennial parents (born 1981-1996) who grew up with the beginning of the digital era show better adaptation to the digital world than parents of Generation X; and (4) social support—parents who have a network of parent communities who actively discuss digital issues are more likely to adopt best practices in child digital supervision. These findings have important policy implications: programs to improve parental digital literacy need to be differentially designed, taking into account the initial ability level, socio-economic context, and specific needs of different groups of parents. One-size-fits-all programs have proven to be less effective in changing parental behavior.

F. Criticism of the Restrictive Approach

One of the most significant findings of the study is that restrictive mediation strategies alone—without active mediation and digital modeling—are not only less effective but potentially counterproductive. Parents who rely solely on a prohibition-and-control approach without building an open dialogue with their children encourage children to look for ways to avoid parental supervision. This phenomenon is in line with what Buckingham (2007)¹⁶ Call it a moral panic approach in child media supervision: when parents go too far in restricting

¹⁶ Buckingham, David. *Beyond Technology: Children's Learning in the Age of Digital Culture*. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007).

children's digital access without providing explanations and building critical literacy, children tend to become more curious and seek out prohibited content through alternative channels – borrowing a friend's device, using a VPN, or accessing the internet outside of parental supervision.

A restrictive approach from a legal perspective, which is excessive, also has the potential to conflict with the child's right to access information and expression guaranteed by Article 13 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The protection of children from harmful content should not be interpreted as a total blocking of access to information, but rather as active assistance in selecting and processing information critically and responsibly.

G. Family Digital Literacy Integration Model

Based on the synthesis of empirical data in this study with the existing theoretical framework, the researcher formulated a conceptual model called the Family Digital Literacy Integration Model which includes four components that interact with each other: The first component is the Value Foundation, which is the strengthening of religious, moral, and ethical values as the foundation for children's navigation in the digital ecosystem. These values become an 'internal compass' that helps children make good decisions even without direct parental supervision. This component is long-term preventive and in line with the child protection goals mandated by the Child Protection Law.

The second component is Technical Capacity, which is the ability of parents to understand and operate available digital security devices and features. This includes knowledge of parental controls, privacy settings, how to report harmful content, and an understanding of how social media algorithms work. This technical capacity is the weakest component among respondents' parents and requires the most intervention attention.

The third component is Open Communication, which is the ability to build an honest and non-judgmental dialogue between parents and children about their digital experiences – including when children encounter confusing or disturbing content. This open communication is a mechanism that allows parents to be the 'first person to contact children' when they encounter dangerous situations online.

The fourth component is Adaptive Monitoring, which is a monitoring approach that is not static but develops as children age and maturity. Strict monitoring for children aged 6-9 years is gradually relaxed as children's ability to navigate independently and responsibly in the digital space increases.

H. Legal Implications and Policy Recommendations

The study identifies at least three areas that require policy and legal interventions to support the implementation of parental digital literacy strategies: First, strengthening digital platform responsibility regulations. Indonesia needs to adopt regulations that require digital platforms to: (a) implement strict and effective age verification; (b) provide parents with regular reports of child activity; (c) install harmful content filters that operate by default for children's user accounts; and (d) provide an easily accessible and responsive harmful content reporting mechanism. Regulations such as the UK's Online Safety Act 2023 can be a relevant reference.

Second, institutional obligations for digital literacy education for parents. The government needs to require educational units to organize digital literacy programs for parents on a regular basis—at least once per semester—as part of the school-family partnership mandated by Permendikbud Number 30 of 2017 concerning Family Involvement in the Implementation of Education.

Third, strengthening the complaint mechanism and recovering digital victims. There needs to be an accessible, responsive, and comprehensive mechanism for children and parents to report cases of digital promiscuity, as well as obtain the necessary legal and psychological assistance. Synergy between the Indonesian Child Protection Commission, the Indonesian Cybercrime Police, the Ministry of Communication and Information, and the Ministry of Social Affairs in handling these cases needs to be strengthened through more concrete regulations.

The findings of this study also contribute to a broader policy debate on the legal position of children in the digital ecosystem. An approach that solely sees children as subjects that need to be protected without considering their rights as legal subjects with developing capacity needs to be balanced with an approach that recognizes children as digital citizens with rights and responsibilities that evolve as they age and capacity.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that parental digital literacy is an important component of family-level protection against children's online risks. The empirical findings from Cirebon City indicate that parental practices vary considerably across technical skills, digital ethics, communication, and safety awareness. Among the strategies identified, technical mediation, active mediation, restrictive mediation, digital modelling, and co-digital literacy represent complementary rather than mutually exclusive approaches to parental mediation. The study contributes to the literature by proposing the Family Digital Literacy Integration Model, which connects value foundations, technical capacity, open communication, and adaptive monitoring. The model suggests that child protection in digital environments should move beyond device restriction toward an integrated form of age-sensitive and relationship-based digital mediation. The socio-legal analysis further indicates that Indonesia's existing child-protection framework establishes important parental protection obligations but requires clearer and more preventive mechanisms concerning the responsibilities of digital platforms, child-sensitive safety measures, and accessible reporting and remedy mechanisms. Accordingly, child online safety should be approached as a shared responsibility involving parents, educational institutions, government agencies, and digital platforms. The findings should nevertheless be interpreted within the study's limitations, particularly its purposive sample and geographical concentration in Cirebon City. Future research should employ larger and more diverse samples, validated measurement instruments, and longitudinal or inferential designs to examine the relationship between parental digital literacy, mediation practices, and children's online risk exposure more rigorously.

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