


Parenting Patterns in the Digitalization Era: A Sociological Study on the Role of Families in RT 002/001 Amantelu, Ambon

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Abstract

This study examines parenting patterns in the era of digitalization through a sociological perspective on the role of families in RT 002/001 Amantelu, Ambon. The research aims to analyze how parents adapt their parenting practices to the rapid development of digital technology and how these changes influence children's social behavior, communication patterns, and family relationships. The study employs a qualitative descriptive method using observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation techniques involving parents, children, and community figures as research participants. Data were analyzed through data reduction, categorization, interpretation, and conclusion drawing to identify the dominant patterns of parenting in the digital era. The findings reveal that digitalization has transformed family interaction patterns by increasing children's exposure to smartphones, social media, and online entertainment. Parents apply various parenting approaches, including democratic, permissive, and protective patterns, depending on their educational background, economic condition, and level of digital literacy. The study also shows that families play a strategic role in controlling digital consumption, instilling moral values, and maintaining social cohesion within the household. However, limited parental supervision and unequal digital understanding among family members often create challenges such as reduced face-to-face interaction, children's dependence on digital devices, and weakened social control within the family environment. The novelty of this study lies in its sociological analysis of parenting practices in a local urban community in Ambon, highlighting the intersection between digital transformation, family adaptation, and community-based social values. The study concludes that effective parenting in the digital era requires adaptive communication, digital literacy, and collaborative family supervision to balance technological advancement with children's social and moral development. This research recommends strengthening family-based digital education programs and community socialization initiatives to support parents in developing responsive and socially oriented parenting practices in the digital age.

Keywords: Digitalization, Parenting Patterns, Family Sociology, Digital Literacy, Social Change

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology over the last two decades has significantly transformed various aspects of social life, including family interaction and parenting practices. The presence of the internet, smartphones, social media, and digital platforms has not only changed the way people communicate, but has also reshaped the dynamics of relationships within the family. Digitalization provides easier access to information, education, and entertainment; however, it simultaneously creates new challenges for parents in supervising and guiding children. Children today grow up in an

environment where digital devices are integrated into everyday life from an early age, making technology an inseparable part of their social experience. Consequently, parents are required to adapt their parenting approaches to remain relevant in the midst of these social and technological changes. In this context, the family no longer functions solely as a traditional primary socialization institution, but also as a space where social values, cultural norms, and digital influences continuously interact and negotiate with one another.

This phenomenon is increasingly visible in urban and semi-urban communities, including RT 002/001 Amantelu, Ambon. Preliminary observations indicate that children in this area spend considerable time using smartphones for entertainment, online games, social media, and educational activities. Digital devices have gradually become part of children's daily routines, often replacing direct interaction with family members and the surrounding community. At the same time, many parents still face limitations in understanding digital technology and supervising children's online activities. Such conditions have created new dynamics within the family, including reduced interpersonal communication, changes in disciplinary patterns, and concerns regarding children's exposure to inappropriate digital content. These realities demonstrate that digitalization is not merely a technological transformation, but also a social and cultural process that influences the structure of family relationships and parenting behavior.

The family plays a central role as the first social institution responsible for shaping children's character, behavior, and social identity. Berger and Luckmann (1966) explain that primary socialization within the family forms the foundation of an individual's social reality. In the digital era, however, this function encounters significant challenges because children are no longer influenced exclusively by parents and schools. Digital spaces, social media, and online communities now contribute substantially to children's social learning processes. Parents are no longer the sole source of information, norms, and values, as children can independently access various forms of knowledge and social interaction through digital platforms. As a result, parenting in the digital age requires more adaptive, communicative, and participatory approaches to maintain the effectiveness of family socialization.

From a sociological perspective, changes in parenting patterns can be understood as part of broader social transformations driven by technological modernization. Castells (2010) argues that the emergence of the network society has altered human interaction patterns into more flexible, fast-moving, and virtually connected relationships. This transformation affects family structures and emotional interactions between parents and children. Parents are not only challenged to monitor children's use of technology, but are also expected to negotiate traditional family values with the rapidly evolving culture of digital media. Therefore, parenting should no longer be viewed merely as a domestic responsibility, but as a social practice influenced by technological developments and shifting cultural environments.

Previous studies have widely discussed parenting practices in the digital era. Livingstone and Helsper (2008) found that parental involvement in children's internet

activities can reduce the risks associated with harmful online content while improving children's digital literacy skills. Their study emphasizes the importance of parental mediation in children's digital experiences. Similarly, Nikken and Jansz (2014) revealed that parental supervision of digital media use is strongly influenced by educational background, technological competence, and emotional relationships within the family. Parents with higher levels of digital literacy tend to be more actively involved in guiding and supervising their children's media consumption.

Research conducted by Lauricella, Wartella, and Rideout (2015) further demonstrated that digital devices have become integrated into the routines of modern families, particularly among young children. Many parents use digital technology both as a source of entertainment and as a strategy to manage children's behavior. However, excessive dependence on digital devices may reduce children's direct social interaction with family members. This finding is supported by Radesky et al. (2016), who argued that increased family dependence on mobile technology can negatively affect the quality of interpersonal communication between parents and children.

In the Indonesian context, studies on digital parenting have also gained increasing scholarly attention. Putri and Nurwati (2021) explained that digitalization influences parental control mechanisms, particularly regarding children's use of social media and online games. Their research highlighted that many parents experience difficulties in understanding rapidly changing digital applications used by children. Furthermore, Hidayati (2018) found that democratic parenting styles are more effective in the digital era because they encourage open communication and mutual understanding between parents and children. Open communication enables children to develop awareness regarding responsible technology use rather than relying solely on strict restrictions.

Additional studies have explored the relationship between digitalization and family social interaction. Sari and Wahyudi (2020) observed that increasing smartphone use among urban communities contributes to more individualistic behavior among children and decreases participation in neighborhood social activities. Meanwhile, Rahmawati (2022) emphasized that family digital literacy has become an important factor in maintaining family resilience amid the complexity of digital information flows. Parents who possess stronger digital literacy skills are generally better prepared to direct children toward productive and educational uses of technology.

Other scholars have also examined the broader sociological implications of digital culture on family life. Turkle (2011) introduced the concept of "alone together," describing situations in which family members share the same physical space while remaining emotionally disconnected due to engagement with digital devices. Such conditions gradually weaken emotional intimacy and social attachment within the family. Buckingham (2008) further argued that children in the digital age require guidance that goes beyond supervision and control. Parents need to engage in dialogue and actively understand children's digital culture in order to build meaningful communication and trust.

Although previous studies have contributed significantly to understanding digital parenting, most of them focus on large urban societies, psychological dimensions of child behavior, or general patterns of media consumption. Limited attention has been given to how local communities negotiate parenting practices within specific social and cultural settings, particularly in eastern Indonesian communities such as Ambon. In local social environments like RT 002/001 Amantelu, digitalization does not merely influence children's media use, but also affects family relationships, community interactions, and local social values. The realities experienced by families in such communities illustrate that parenting in the digital era is shaped not only by technology, but also by local cultural norms, educational backgrounds, economic conditions, and communal relationships.

Through the perspective of family sociology, this study seeks to examine how families in RT 002/001 Amantelu adapt their parenting practices amid the expansion of digital culture. The discussion is not limited to children's use of technology, but also explores how parents interpret their roles as primary agents of socialization within a digitally connected society. By placing local family experiences at the center of analysis, this study attempts to demonstrate that parenting practices in the digital age are diverse and socially constructed according to the cultural realities of the community in which families live.

Based on these considerations, this research aims to analyze parenting patterns in the era of digitalization and to understand how families maintain their social functions amid changes in children's behavior and interaction patterns in RT 002/001 Amantelu, Ambon. The study also seeks to explore parental supervision strategies, family communication patterns, and the ways families attempt to preserve social and moral values within the context of rapid digital transformation.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research approach with a descriptive sociological design to explore parenting patterns in the era of digitalization within the family environment of RT 002/001 Amantelu, Ambon. A qualitative approach was considered the most appropriate because the research aimed to understand social experiences, meanings, interactions, and interpretations constructed by parents and children in their everyday lives. Parenting practices in the digital era are closely related to emotions, values, communication patterns, and social adaptation processes that cannot be fully measured through quantitative indicators alone. Qualitative research allows researchers to capture the complexity of family relationships and social realities in a more contextual and human-centered manner. As explained by Creswell (2014), qualitative methods are particularly suitable for examining social phenomena that require in-depth understanding of participants' experiences and interpretations within their natural settings.

The research was conducted in RT 002/001 Amantelu, Ambon, because this community reflects the social dynamics of families experiencing rapid exposure to digital technology while still maintaining strong communal and cultural relationships. Preliminary

observations indicated that children and adolescents in this area actively use smartphones and social media in their daily routines, while parents demonstrate varying levels of digital literacy and supervision practices. The location was also selected because it represents a local urban community where traditional family values coexist with modern technological influences, creating a unique sociological context for examining parenting transformations in the digital age. This setting enabled the researcher to observe how digitalization influences family interaction patterns not only at the household level but also within broader neighborhood relationships.

The informants in this study consisted of 12 participants, including eight parents, three adolescents, and one community leader. Parents were selected because they serve as the primary actors in the parenting process and possess direct experiences in supervising and guiding children's digital activities. The adolescent participants were included to provide perspectives regarding their interactions with digital technology and their relationships with parents in everyday life. Meanwhile, the community leader was chosen to provide broader insights into social changes occurring within the neighborhood due to increasing digital engagement among families. Informants were selected purposively based on specific criteria, including active involvement in family caregiving, regular use of digital devices within the household, and willingness to share their experiences openly. This purposive sampling technique allowed the researcher to obtain rich and relevant information aligned with the objectives of the study (Moleong, 2018).

Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation. In-depth interviews were used because they enabled the researcher to explore participants' feelings, perceptions, parenting strategies, and personal experiences regarding children's use of digital technology. Interviews were conducted flexibly and conversationally in order to create a comfortable atmosphere and encourage informants to express their thoughts naturally. Participant observation was also applied to understand daily family interactions directly, including communication patterns between parents and children, children's use of smartphones, and parental supervision practices within the household environment. Observation helped the researcher capture social realities that were sometimes difficult to express verbally during interviews. Documentation techniques were used to support field findings through photographs, field notes, and community-related documents relevant to the research topic.

To ensure data validity and reliability, the study applied triangulation techniques. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from parents, adolescents, and community leaders to identify consistency and differences in perspectives regarding parenting and digitalization. Method triangulation was also implemented by comparing findings from interviews, observations, and documentation. This process helped strengthen the credibility of the research findings because data were examined from multiple angles and social contexts. Furthermore, the researcher continuously reviewed and interpreted the collected data throughout the fieldwork process to maintain consistency

between empirical findings and sociological interpretations. Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), consisting of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Through this approach, the study was able to develop a comprehensive understanding of how families in RT 002/001 Amantelu negotiate parenting roles and social values amid the ongoing expansion of digital culture.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Digital Transformation and Changes in Family Interaction Patterns

The rapid expansion of digital technology has gradually transformed patterns of interaction within families in RT 002/001 Amantelu, Ambon. The presence of smartphones, internet access, and social media platforms has become inseparable from everyday family life, influencing how parents and children communicate, spend time together, and build emotional relationships. Based on field findings, digital devices are no longer viewed merely as communication tools, but have become part of daily routines that shape social behavior within the household. Children often use smartphones for entertainment, online games, school assignments, and social networking, while parents simultaneously rely on digital media for work, communication, and information access. These conditions create a new interaction pattern in which family members may physically occupy the same space but engage more intensively with their own digital devices than with one another.

Field observations conducted in several households revealed that during the afternoon and evening hours, many family members gathered in living rooms while focusing on their respective smartphones. In some homes, television programs continued playing in the background, but direct conversation among family members occurred only occasionally. Children were observed scrolling through social media applications or watching online videos, while parents used messaging applications or Facebook to communicate with relatives and acquaintances. Although the atmosphere appeared calm and orderly, interpersonal interaction within the family was relatively limited. Greetings and short conversations still occurred, particularly when discussing household matters, but longer discussions and collective storytelling activities were becoming less frequent compared to previous years, according to several informants.

One parent informant, identified as Mrs. R., explained during the interview that before smartphones became widely used, evenings were usually spent talking with children or neighbors outside the house. However, she acknowledged that family habits had gradually changed because each family member now preferred spending time with digital devices after daily activities. Similarly, another informant, Mr. A., stated that children often appeared more enthusiastic when interacting with online content than when participating in family conversations. Although parents attempted to limit smartphone use during meal times, such rules were not always consistently implemented because parents themselves were also accustomed to using mobile devices throughout the day.

These findings indicate that digitalization has subtly restructured communication

patterns within families. The transformation does not necessarily eliminate family interaction entirely, but it changes the form and intensity of social engagement. This condition reflects what Turkle (2011) describes as the phenomenon of “alone together,” where individuals remain physically close while becoming emotionally and socially distant due to technological immersion. In RT 002/001 Amantelu, this phenomenon was visible in the reduced frequency of collective family activities such as storytelling, outdoor socializing, or communal discussions that traditionally strengthened emotional bonds within households.

At the same time, digital technology also creates new forms of interaction within families. Several parents explained that communication with children sometimes became easier through digital platforms, especially when parents were working outside the home. Messaging applications enabled parents to monitor children’s whereabouts, remind them about household responsibilities, or maintain communication throughout the day. One adolescent informant, identified as S., explained that communication with parents through chat applications often felt more practical because messages could be delivered quickly even when family members were physically separated. This finding demonstrates that digital transformation does not only weaken interaction, but also redefines the ways family relationships are maintained in contemporary society.

Field observations further revealed that children’s attachment to smartphones significantly influenced their participation in neighborhood social life. In earlier years, children frequently gathered outdoors to play collectively in front of houses or within neighborhood spaces. However, during the research period, many children preferred staying indoors while engaging with online games or social media. In the evenings, only a small number of children were observed participating in outdoor communal activities. According to community leader Mr. H., social interaction among children had noticeably decreased compared to previous generations because digital entertainment provided easier and more individualized forms of engagement. He explained indirectly that children now tend to interact virtually with peers from broader online networks rather than strengthening social relationships within the local neighborhood environment.

The transformation of family interaction patterns in RT 002/001 Amantelu can be understood through the concept of digital family practices introduced by Mascheroni, Ponte, and Jorge (2021). This perspective emphasizes that digital technology has become embedded within everyday family routines, reshaping communication, emotional relationships, and social organization inside the household. Technology is no longer external to family life; rather, it forms part of the social structure through which family members negotiate intimacy, authority, and connection. In this study, digital media simultaneously functioned as a tool for communication and as a source of social distance, depending on how families managed its use.

The following table summarizes the observed transformation of family interaction patterns in the research area.

Table 1. Transformation of Family Interaction Patterns in RT 002/001 Amantelu

| Before Digital Intensification | After Digital Intensification |
|---|--|
| Frequent face-to-face conversations | Communication often interrupted by smartphone use |
| Children played outdoors with neighbors | Children spend more time indoors using gadgets |
| Collective family activities more common | Individualized entertainment becomes dominant |
| Parents acted as primary information source | Children access information independently online |
| Community interaction relatively intensive | Social interaction increasingly mediated digitally |

Source: Field Observation Data, 2026

The findings also demonstrate that digital transformation produces both adaptive and disruptive consequences for family life. On one hand, technology facilitates faster communication, broader access to educational resources, and stronger long-distance connectivity among family members. On the other hand, excessive dependence on digital devices contributes to reduced emotional intimacy, weaker social attachment, and declining interpersonal interaction within households. This dual reality illustrates that digitalization is not a purely technological process, but a broader social transformation affecting the structure of family relationships and everyday cultural practices.

From a sociological perspective, these changes reflect the transition toward what Castells (2010) identifies as the network society, where social interaction increasingly occurs through digitally connected networks rather than solely through direct physical relationships. Families in RT 002/001 Amantelu are gradually adapting to this transformation by renegotiating communication patterns, parenting roles, and emotional relationships within digitally mediated environments. Although traditional communal values remain visible within the neighborhood, digital culture increasingly shapes how family members interact, communicate, and construct their everyday social experiences.

Parenting Adaptation in the Era of Digital Society

The expansion of digital technology has encouraged parents in RT 002/001 Amantelu, Ambon, to continuously adapt their parenting practices in response to changing social realities. Parenting in the digital era is no longer limited to providing physical care, emotional support, and moral guidance, but also involves supervising children’s interaction with technology and online environments. The findings of this study indicate that parents are actively negotiating between maintaining traditional parenting values and responding to the growing influence of digital culture in children’s everyday lives. Although parents generally recognize the educational and communicative benefits of technology, they simultaneously express concerns regarding excessive gadget use, declining social interaction, and children’s exposure to inappropriate online content.

Field observations showed that parental supervision of children's digital activities varied significantly among households. In several homes, parents attempted to establish specific rules regarding smartphone use, such as limiting screen time during study hours, meal times, or evening family gatherings. However, these rules were often implemented flexibly rather than rigidly. During observations conducted in the evening, some parents were seen reminding children to stop playing online games and focus on school assignments, yet only a few minutes later the children returned to their devices. In one household, the researcher observed a mother repeatedly calling her son to participate in family conversation while the child remained focused on a mobile game. The mother eventually sat beside him and began asking about the game itself as a way to initiate communication. This interaction illustrates that many parents adapt not by entirely prohibiting technology, but by attempting to enter children's digital world to maintain emotional closeness.

Several parents acknowledged during interviews that controlling children's digital behavior had become increasingly difficult because technology was deeply integrated into educational activities and social interaction. Mrs. N., one of the parent informants, explained indirectly that she often felt uncertain about distinguishing between educational and entertainment content because children frequently claimed they were studying while using smartphones. Similarly, Mr. A. stated that parents today could no longer apply parenting methods used by previous generations because children's lives were now closely connected to online environments. According to him, excessive restrictions often triggered emotional resistance from children, making communication and negotiation more effective than strict punishment.

These findings demonstrate that parenting adaptation in the digital era involves continuous negotiation between supervision and freedom. Parents are increasingly aware that authoritarian control alone is insufficient for managing children's digital behavior. Instead, many families gradually adopt more dialogical and participatory parenting approaches. This condition aligns with the perspective of Livingstone and Blum-Ross (2021), who argue that digital parenting requires flexible mediation strategies where parents guide, negotiate, and communicate with children rather than solely imposing rigid restrictions. Parenting in digital society therefore becomes relational, emphasizing trust-building and mutual understanding within family interactions.

The adaptation process was also influenced by parents' educational backgrounds and levels of digital literacy. Parents with better understanding of digital technology tended to supervise children more actively and communicate more openly regarding online risks. In contrast, parents with limited digital knowledge often relied on general warnings or restrictions without fully understanding the applications and platforms used by children. One parent informant, identified as Mrs. T., admitted indirectly that she frequently felt left behind by technological developments because children appeared more knowledgeable about smartphones and internet applications than adults. Consequently, she preferred reminding children about moral behavior and religious values rather than attempting to monitor

technical aspects of digital use.

Field observations further revealed that parenting adaptation often occurred through emotional strategies rather than formal control mechanisms. In several households, parents attempted to reduce children’s dependence on gadgets by encouraging participation in household activities, religious gatherings, or neighborhood interactions. During afternoon observations, some parents invited children to accompany them to local markets, help prepare meals, or visit relatives. These activities were not explicitly framed as anti-technology measures, but functioned as indirect efforts to maintain social interaction and emotional attachment within the family. Parents appeared aware that excessive digital engagement could weaken children’s involvement in communal life, even though they did not always possess the resources or knowledge to regulate technology comprehensively.

The following table summarizes the forms of parenting adaptation identified in the field:

Table 2. Parenting Adaptation Patterns in the Digital Era

| Parenting Adaptation | Observed Practices |
|--------------------------|--|
| Flexible supervision | Limiting gadget use during study or meal times |
| Dialogical communication | Discussing online behavior and digital risks with children |
| Emotional negotiation | Parents engaging with children’s digital interests |
| Moral reinforcement | Emphasizing religious and ethical values |
| Social redirection | Encouraging participation in family and community activities |

Source: Interview and Field Observation Data, 2026

The findings also indicate that parents experience emotional dilemmas in adapting to digital society. On one hand, technology is viewed as necessary for education, communication, and access to information. On the other hand, parents worry about reduced discipline, declining face-to-face interaction, and children’s increasing dependence on virtual environments. One adolescent informant, identified as R., explained indirectly that children often perceived parental supervision as excessive interference, especially when parents lacked understanding of online culture and digital communication patterns. Such conditions occasionally created tension between parents and children, particularly regarding screen time limitations and online gaming activities.

From a sociological perspective, these dynamics reflect broader transformations in family authority structures within contemporary digital society. Traditional parenting models based primarily on hierarchical control are gradually shifting toward more negotiated and adaptive relationships. Holloway and Green (2021) explain that digital parenting today is strongly influenced by inequalities in technological knowledge, social resources, and access to digital literacy. Families with stronger digital understanding tend to navigate technological change more confidently, while others rely more heavily on cultural values and emotional

bonds to maintain parental authority.

Ultimately, the parenting adaptations observed in RT 002/001 Amantelu demonstrate that families are not passive recipients of technological change. Instead, parents actively reinterpret their caregiving roles within the realities of digital society by combining supervision, emotional closeness, communication, and moral guidance. Although challenges remain significant, these adaptive practices illustrate the family's continuing role as a central institution in shaping children's social behavior amid rapid technological transformation.

Digital Literacy and the Social Role of the Family

Digital literacy has become an increasingly important aspect of family life in RT 002/001 Amantelu, Ambon, particularly as digital technology becomes deeply integrated into children's educational, social, and entertainment activities. The findings of this study indicate that the family's ability to respond to digital transformation is strongly influenced by parents' understanding of technology, online communication, and digital risks. In this context, digital literacy is not merely related to technical skills in operating smartphones or accessing the internet, but also involves the capacity to guide children ethically, socially, and emotionally within digital environments. Families with stronger digital awareness appeared more prepared to supervise children's online behavior, while families with limited digital understanding often experienced difficulties in balancing technological access and social control.

Field observations showed that digital literacy levels among parents varied considerably. Some parents were able to recognize the applications frequently used by children, monitor social media activity, and discuss online risks openly. Others, however, admitted that they only understood basic smartphone functions such as phone calls and messaging applications. During observations in several households, parents were often seen asking children for assistance in operating applications or accessing information online. In one home, the researcher observed a father requesting help from his teenage son to activate internet data and open educational videos for younger siblings. Although this interaction reflected positive intergenerational cooperation, it also illustrated how children sometimes possessed greater technological competence than parents themselves.

This condition indirectly affected the family's social role as the primary institution responsible for guiding children's behavior. Parents with limited digital literacy frequently relied on moral advice and general prohibitions rather than direct supervision of digital content. Mrs. T., one of the parent informants, explained indirectly that she often reminded her children not to imitate inappropriate behavior from social media even though she did not fully understand the platforms they used daily. Similarly, Mr. H., a community leader, stated that many parents in the neighborhood still perceived digital technology primarily as a communication tool and had not fully realized the broader social influence of online culture on children's attitudes and behavior.

At the same time, several parents demonstrated adaptive efforts to improve their understanding of digital environments. One informant, Mrs. R., explained indirectly that she

gradually learned about social media platforms because she wanted to understand what kinds of content attracted her children’s attention. She admitted that although technology sometimes felt overwhelming, she believed parents could not entirely separate children from digital life. Instead, parents needed to accompany and guide children so that technology could be used productively. This finding illustrates that digital literacy within families develops not only through formal education, but also through everyday interaction and parenting experiences.

Field observations further revealed that digital literacy significantly influenced patterns of family communication and supervision. In households where parents actively discussed online behavior, children appeared more open in sharing information regarding social media activities, online games, and school-related digital assignments. Conversations regarding internet use were often integrated into everyday family interaction rather than treated as formal supervision. For example, during evening observations in one household, parents and children discussed viral videos circulating on social media while simultaneously talking about appropriate online behavior and the importance of respecting others in digital communication. Such interactions demonstrated that digital literacy could strengthen family communication and encourage more participatory parenting practices.

However, in families with lower levels of digital understanding, supervision tended to focus primarily on limiting screen time without deeper discussion regarding digital ethics or online risks. Several parents expressed uncertainty about how to protect children from harmful online content because technological developments occurred faster than their own ability to adapt. One parent informant, identified as Mr. A., explained indirectly that he sometimes felt anxious because children could access unlimited information through smartphones, while parents themselves lacked sufficient knowledge to monitor all online activities. Consequently, many parents relied heavily on trust and moral teaching as the main forms of social control within the household.

The following table summarizes the relationship between digital literacy and family social roles identified during the research process:

Table 3. Digital Literacy and Family Social Functions

| Level of Digital Literacy | Observed Family Practices |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Higher digital understanding | Active supervision and open communication regarding online behavior |
| Moderate digital understanding | Combination of monitoring and moral guidance |
| Limited digital understanding | Dependence on restrictions and general warnings |
| Adaptive family response | Parents learning digital platforms through children |
| Weak digital supervision | Difficulty identifying online risks and harmful content |

Source: Interview and Field Observation Data, 2026.

The findings suggest that digital literacy has become closely connected to the family's ability to maintain its social and educational functions. Families are no longer expected only to provide emotional and moral support, but also to equip children with the capacity to navigate digital environments responsibly. This condition reflects what Holloway and Green (2021) describe as family digital resilience, referring to the ability of families to adapt socially and emotionally within rapidly changing technological environments. Digital resilience is shaped not only by access to technology, but also by communication patterns, educational background, and the family's capacity to negotiate technological change collectively.

From a sociological perspective, the varying levels of digital literacy observed in RT 002/001 Amantelu also reveal broader forms of social inequality within digital society. Families with stronger educational and technological resources generally appeared more confident in supervising children's digital activities, while others experienced uncertainty and dependence on traditional forms of authority. Nevertheless, despite these limitations, the findings demonstrate that families continue to function as important agents of socialization by transmitting moral values, regulating behavior, and maintaining emotional attachment amid rapid digital transformation.

The role of the family therefore remains highly significant in shaping children's social behavior within contemporary digital culture. Although digital technology increasingly influences everyday interaction, the family still serves as the primary environment where children learn responsibility, communication ethics, and social values. In RT 002/001 Amantelu, digital literacy emerged not merely as a technical competence, but as a social process through which families continuously adapt, negotiate, and preserve their roles in an increasingly connected world.

Negotiating Social Values and Local Culture in the Digital Era

The expansion of digital technology in RT 002/001 Amantelu, Ambon, has not only transformed patterns of communication and parenting practices, but has also influenced the way families maintain social values and local cultural traditions in everyday life. The findings of this study reveal that families continuously negotiate between preserving communal norms inherited through local culture and adapting to the increasingly dominant influence of digital lifestyles. In this context, digitalization is not viewed solely as a technological process, but also as a cultural transformation that reshapes how individuals understand relationships, authority, morality, and social responsibility within the family and community environment.

Field observations demonstrated that traditional social values such as mutual respect, communal solidarity, religious discipline, and interpersonal closeness remain visible in the daily lives of families in Amantelu. Parents still encourage children to greet elders respectfully, participate in religious activities, and maintain relationships with neighbors and extended family members. However, the forms of social interaction through which these values are transmitted have gradually changed. During evening observations, several children were seen remaining indoors using smartphones while community interactions occurred outside the house among adults. In earlier years, according to several informants, children often gathered

in front of houses, participated in traditional games, or joined neighborhood conversations with older community members. Today, these interactions have become less frequent as digital entertainment increasingly occupies children's leisure time.

One parent informant, Mrs. R., explained indirectly that she sometimes worried children were becoming less socially sensitive because they preferred spending time with gadgets rather than engaging in direct interaction with neighbors or relatives. Nevertheless, she emphasized that parents continued trying to teach respect and social responsibility through daily reminders and religious teachings at home. Similarly, Mr. H., a community leader, stated that although technology had changed children's habits, families in the neighborhood still attempted to preserve local cultural values by encouraging participation in communal events, religious gatherings, and family ceremonies. According to him, parents recognized that digital influence could not be entirely prevented, but they believed cultural values could still function as social guidance for younger generations.

These findings indicate that families are not passively accepting digital transformation, but are actively negotiating between modern technological influences and existing cultural norms. In many households, parents attempted to regulate children's digital behavior not only through restrictions, but also by strengthening moral and cultural values within everyday family interaction. For instance, field observations showed that several families required children to temporarily stop using smartphones during family meals, prayer times, or visits from relatives. Such practices reflected symbolic efforts to maintain interpersonal respect and collective interaction despite the growing presence of digital devices within domestic spaces.

At the same time, digital culture also introduced new forms of social identity and interaction among children and adolescents. Several parents expressed concern that online trends, language styles, and social media behavior were gradually influencing children's attitudes toward local customs and authority figures. One informant, identified as Mr. A., explained indirectly that children sometimes imitated behaviors seen on social media without fully understanding whether such actions aligned with local norms and family expectations. He noted that parents often faced difficulties balancing openness to technological development with the responsibility to preserve ethical and cultural values rooted in the local community.

Field observations further revealed that digital technology occasionally altered children's participation in communal social activities. During neighborhood gatherings and informal evening interactions among residents, some children appeared less engaged and more focused on mobile devices. In one observed situation, a group of adults was discussing community matters outside a house while several children sitting nearby remained occupied with online videos and games. Although children were physically present within the communal environment, their social attention appeared directed toward virtual spaces rather than ongoing local interaction. This condition illustrates how digitalization can subtly reshape social belonging and participation within community life.

The negotiation between digital culture and local values identified in this study can be

understood through the concept of cultural hybridity in digital society proposed by Kraidy (2021), which explains how local communities reinterpret global cultural influences within their own social contexts rather than simply replacing traditional culture entirely. In RT 002/001 Amantelu, digitalization does not eliminate local traditions, but instead creates ongoing adaptation where families selectively integrate aspects of digital culture while maintaining core communal values. Parents continue emphasizing respect, religious discipline, and family solidarity even as children become increasingly connected to global online environments.

The following table summarizes forms of cultural negotiation observed within families in the research area:

Table 4. Negotiation Between Digital Culture and Local Social Values

| Local Social Values Maintained | Influence of Digital Culture |
|---|--|
| Respect toward elders | Increased individual screen engagement |
| Participation in religious activities | Greater exposure to global online trends |
| Communal interaction with neighbors | Reduced outdoor social activities among children |
| Family gathering traditions | Smartphone use during family interaction |
| Moral guidance through family communication | Independent online information consumption |

Source: Interview and Field Observation Data, 2026.

The findings also demonstrate that local culture continues to function as a social control mechanism amid technological transformation. Parents often relied on cultural narratives, religious teachings, and community expectations to guide children’s behavior because these values were considered more stable and understandable than rapidly changing digital trends. One mother informant, identified as Mrs. N., explained indirectly that although children spent significant time online, parents still believed family values and religious education could help children distinguish appropriate behavior from harmful influences encountered on social media.

From a sociological perspective, this condition reflects the continuing relevance of the family as a cultural institution within contemporary digital society. As argued by Couldry and Hepp (2021), digital media increasingly shapes social reality and everyday interaction, yet individuals continue interpreting technological experiences through existing cultural frameworks and social relationships. Families in RT 002/001 Amantelu therefore demonstrate that digitalization is not simply a process of cultural replacement, but a continuous negotiation between modernity and local identity.

Ultimately, the findings reveal that the preservation of social values in the digital era depends not on rejecting technology entirely, but on the family’s ability to integrate technological adaptation with cultural continuity. In RT 002/001 Amantelu, families continue striving to maintain social cohesion, moral responsibility, and communal relationships while simultaneously adapting to the realities of digital society. This ongoing negotiation illustrates

that local culture remains an important foundation for shaping social behavior amid rapid technological change.

Family Challenges and Social Consequences of Digitalization

The rapid expansion of digital technology has brought significant changes to family life in RT 002/001 Amantelu, Ambon, creating not only opportunities but also various social challenges that affect relationships within households and the broader community. The findings of this study indicate that families are increasingly confronted with difficulties in maintaining interpersonal communication, emotional closeness, and social control amid children's growing dependence on digital devices. Although technology provides easier access to information, communication, and education, excessive and uncontrolled use has gradually altered patterns of interaction, social participation, and everyday family dynamics.

Field observations revealed that smartphones had become central to the daily routines of many children and adolescents in the neighborhood. During afternoons and evenings, several children were observed sitting individually with their devices for extended periods, either watching videos, scrolling through social media, or playing online games. In some households, parents repeatedly reminded children to reduce screen time, yet these reminders often resulted only in temporary compliance. The researcher also observed that children sometimes responded minimally when parents attempted to initiate conversation because their attention remained focused on digital content. Although such situations did not always lead to open conflict, they reflected subtle emotional distancing within family interaction patterns.

Several parent informants expressed concerns regarding children's increasing attachment to smartphones. Mrs. T. explained indirectly that children today often became easily irritated when asked to stop using gadgets, particularly during online gaming activities. She noted that parents occasionally struggled to distinguish between normal technological engagement and excessive dependence because digital devices had already become part of children's educational and social lives. Similarly, Mr. A. stated that children appeared less interested in participating in household conversations or community activities compared to previous generations. According to him, family members could spend long periods in the same room without meaningful interaction because each person remained occupied with their own device.

These findings suggest that digitalization has influenced not only individual behavior but also the emotional structure of family relationships. This condition aligns with Turkle's (2011) argument regarding the phenomenon of emotional disconnection within technologically connected societies. In RT 002/001 Amantelu, family members remained physically present together while increasingly interacting through individualized digital experiences. The weakening of direct communication did not necessarily eliminate family relationships entirely, but it altered the quality and intensity of emotional interaction within households.

Field observations also demonstrated broader social consequences beyond the

household level. Community leaders and parents reported that children’s participation in neighborhood activities had gradually declined as digital entertainment became more dominant. During several evening observations, communal spaces that were previously active with children’s games and informal interaction appeared relatively quiet. Only a small number of children were observed participating in outdoor activities, while many remained indoors using smartphones. One community leader, identified as Mr. H., explained indirectly that neighborhood interaction among younger generations had become less intensive because children now preferred communicating through online platforms rather than direct face-to-face engagement.

At the same time, digitalization also created challenges related to parental supervision and social control. Several parents admitted difficulties in monitoring the content accessed by children due to rapid technological developments and limited digital literacy. Mrs. N. explained indirectly that parents often worried about children encountering inappropriate language, violent content, or misleading information online, but lacked sufficient understanding of digital applications to supervise effectively. In some cases, parents relied primarily on trust, religious advice, and moral teaching because they felt unable to fully regulate children’s online activities.

The following table summarizes the main family challenges and social consequences identified during the research process:

Table 5. Family Challenges and Social Consequences of Digitalization

| Family and Social Challenges | Observed Consequences |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Excessive smartphone use | Reduced face-to-face family interaction |
| Limited parental digital literacy | Weak supervision of online activities |
| Dependence on online entertainment | Declining participation in neighborhood activities |
| Individualized digital engagement | Emotional distancing within households |
| Exposure to online culture | Shifts in children’s communication behavior and values |

Source: Interview and Field Observation Data, 2026.

Despite these challenges, the findings also reveal that families continue attempting to adapt and maintain social cohesion amid technological change. Several parents encouraged children to participate in religious gatherings, family visits, and household activities as strategies to reduce excessive gadget dependence. During observations, some families intentionally created moments of collective interaction, such as shared meals or evening conversations, even though these interactions were occasionally interrupted by smartphone use. Such efforts indicate that families remain aware of the importance of maintaining emotional bonds and social responsibility within the household.

From a sociological perspective, the challenges experienced by families in RT 002/001 Amantelu reflect broader transformations associated with digital society. According to Couldry and Hepp (2021), digital media increasingly mediates everyday social life, shaping

how individuals communicate, build relationships, and understand social reality. As a result, families must continuously renegotiate social roles, authority structures, and emotional relationships within technologically mediated environments. Digitalization therefore becomes both a source of social opportunity and a factor contributing to new forms of social fragmentation.

The findings also demonstrate that the social consequences of digitalization are closely linked to inequalities in digital literacy, parenting capacity, and access to social resources. Families with stronger communication patterns and greater awareness of digital risks appeared more capable of balancing technological use with social interaction. Conversely, families with limited digital understanding often experienced uncertainty in guiding children through online environments. This condition supports the perspective of Livingstone and Blum-Ross (2021), who argue that parenting in the digital age requires ongoing adaptation, negotiation, and emotional engagement rather than solely relying on traditional forms of authority.

Ultimately, the experiences of families in RT 002/001 Amantelu illustrate that digitalization is not simply a technological phenomenon, but a complex social transformation affecting family relationships, community interaction, and cultural behavior. While technology offers educational and communicative advantages, it simultaneously challenges families to preserve emotional closeness, social participation, and moral guidance within everyday life. The family therefore remains a crucial social institution responsible for balancing technological adaptation with the maintenance of human relationships and communal values in the digital era.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that digitalization has significantly transformed parenting patterns and family interaction in RT 002/001 Amantelu, Ambon, by reshaping communication, supervision, and social relationships within households. Families are required to adapt their parenting approaches through negotiation, emotional communication, and flexible supervision in response to children's increasing engagement with digital technology. Although digital media offers educational and communicative benefits, it also creates challenges such as reduced face-to-face interaction, weakened social participation, and difficulties in parental control. The findings further show that local cultural values, religious norms, and communal relationships remain important foundations in maintaining family cohesion amid rapid technological change. Therefore, effective parenting in the digital era depends not only on digital literacy, but also on the family's ability to balance technological adaptation with the preservation of moral values, emotional closeness, and social responsibility within community life.

ETHICAL STATEMENT AND DISCLOSURE

This study was conducted in accordance with established ethical principles, including informed consent, protection of informants' confidentiality, and respect for local cultural values. Special consideration was given to participants from vulnerable groups to ensure their safety, comfort, and equal rights to participate. No external funding was received, and the authors declare no conflict of interest. All data and information presented were collected through valid research methods and have been verified to ensure their accuracy and reliability. The use of artificial intelligence (AI) was limited to technical assistance for writing and language editing, without influencing the scientific substance of the work. The authors express their gratitude to the informants for their valuable insights, and to the anonymous reviewers for their constructive feedback on an earlier version of this manuscript. The authors take full responsibility for the content and conclusions of this article.

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