



## **The Urgency of Digital Literacy and Ethics for Parents in Educating Children in the Digital Age**

**Karinta Utami\*, Seni Apriliya, Erwin Saputra**

Master Program in Primary Education of the Post-Graduate School  
Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia

\*Corresponding Author. Email: [karintautami@upi.edu](mailto:karintautami@upi.edu)

**Abstract:** The purpose of this study is to examine the level of digital literacy and ethics among parents with primary school-aged children in the digital era. This study employed a descriptive method with a quantitative approach. The participants in this study were 54 parents with children in primary school aged 4–6 in Tasikmalaya City, West Java Province. The research instrument utilized a questionnaire adapted from government policy on digital ethics, which included four components: digital ethics, understanding of negative content, fundamental knowledge of interaction, participation, and collaboration, and basic knowledge of internet transactions. A descriptive data analysis technique was utilized to investigate the discovered data. The findings revealed that parents' understanding of digital literacy and ethics as a provision for their children's education at home was in the high category. This shows that the government's policies on digital literacy and ethics have been implemented and understood by parents. Furthermore, the functional characteristics include a high infrastructure for accessing the internet at home, demonstrating the ease of accessing the internet or digital media.

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## **Introduction**

The use of digital space in the current era is increasing rapidly, especially since the Covid-19 pandemic in 2019. Based on an internet survey report conducted by the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) in 2019, it shows that internet usage data based on age is in the highest position, namely 8, 31% are aged 10–14, which are children of high primary school age and junior high school age. It is undeniable that information and communication technology (ICT) in the current era has become an important thing and can affect all aspects of life, including education (Irawan, Yusufianto, Agustina, & Dean, 2020).

Moreover, the global COVID-19 epidemic has resulted in a shift in school learning approaches toward School From Home (SFH), with learning activities shifting to online modes. As a result, school-age children are spending more time accessing digital media and material, making them a significant segment of digital users (Azzahra & Amanta, 2021). The usage of digital space is inescapable, even for children in primary school. In the “Buku Panduan Internet untuk Orang Tua” (Kominfo & Siberkreas, 2021) Because the millennial generation, also known as Generation Z, were born and grew up in an era of rapid technological progress, parents and teachers cannot separate the digital aspects of their children's education.

But in fact, it is often found that digital media users are only able to operate digital media and tools but are not wise enough to use them. Especially in the aspect of the ability to sort out information and content on social media as well as the rise of cases of irregularities



and negative content such as invasions of privacy, hoaxes, addiction, pornography and other negative things (Anggraini & Maulidya, 2020; Damayanti & Gemiharto, 2019; Kusumastuti et al., 2021; Prihatmojo & Badawi, 2020). The ease of disseminating information through digital media certainly has positive as well as negative aspects for young digital media users who do not fully understand the consequences of using digital media, which can trigger psychological disorders in children and adolescents (Pratiwi & Piotanova, 2017). This should be a concern for parents. Aslan (2019) concluded in his research on parenting in the digital era that parents must keep up with the times and technology, including in applying parenting and education to children, so as not to fall into negative things.

Several initiatives are undertaken by the government, including the national literacy movement called “Gerakan Literasi Nasional” (GLN), the Siberkreasi program, and the re-inclusion of ICT into school curricula, which have yet to be implemented effectively and with a specific focus on improving digital literacy skills (Azzahra & Amanta, 2021). However, in reality, attention to digital literacy skills has not been seen optimally. Furthermore, according to a 2019 APJII report, 49% of internet users in the country have been victims of cyber bullying. According to UNICEF, cyber bullying is bullying or bullying using digital technology. This can occur in various types of social media, such as short message media, playing games, and other digital interaction media (Budi & Anggraini, 2021; Chan, Cheung, & Lee, 2021; Palomares-ruiz & Cebri, 2021; Yang, 2021).

The four components of digital ethics are examined in depth in this research, as well as the significance of each component in a digital ethics policy for parents with primary school-aged children. (1) digital ethics; (2) knowledge of information containing hoaxes, hate speech, pornography, bullying, and other negative content; (3) basic knowledge of interacting, participating, and collaborating in the digital space by digital ethical rules and applicable regulations; and (4) basic knowledge of interacting and transacting electronically in the digital space by digital ethical rules and applicable regulations (Kusumastuti et al., 2021). The usage of digital space is growing, including in the field of education. This also has an impact on the role of parents in the process of teaching their children in the digital age (Lestari & Kurnianingsih, 2018). According to Lestari (2018), the findings of his study revealed that the digital literacy ability of parents at Cempaka Baru 05 Pagi State Elementary School in Central Jakarta was quite good in terms of technological and cognitive aspects, but several digital literacy skills needed to be improved in terms of ethics.

Based on the research findings reviewed above, it is clear that there are several issues with digital media, not only in terms of capacity to use digital media but also in terms of ethics in digital activities, which have many harmful consequences. Not to mention the numerous cases of hoaxes, digital fraud, pornographic content, hate speech, and so on that are freely available to anybody, including children. Because children have become consumers of the digital space, it is essential to provide digital literacy instruction and digital ethics to children in the home (Irawan et al., 2020). The purpose of this study is to find the level of parents' understanding of digital literacy and ethics as a provision for their children's education at home. We hope to look more deeply into policies and measure digital literacy and digital ethics for parents with children in elementary school as part of this research so that it can be used as an example and consideration when formulating policies or programs to support the success of digital literacy policies in Indonesia.

## **Research Method**

This study utilized a descriptive method with a quantitative approach. A questionnaire was utilized to gather data of the study. Using Google Form media,

questionnaires were delivered to 54 parents with children ages 4–6 at an elementary school in Tasikmalaya City, West Java Province. The questionnaire's questions were structured in a pattern that correlated to the four components of the Digital Ethics Policy, as shown in Table 2 below. The questions were in the form of open and closed questions (using a Likert measurement scale) to determine how far parents' roles in the application of digital ethics go with existing digital literacy policies. The descriptive approach was used to analyze technical data. A validation test was conducted on 25 questionnaire statements, giving a significance value of 0.05 for all questionnaire items. Furthermore, a reliability test was performed, providing a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.943 ( $> 0.6$ ), showing that the questionnaire was reliable. Table 1 shows the results of examining the questionnaire's validity and reliability.

**Table 1. The results of the validation test for the questionnaire**

Question Significant	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9
	<0.01	0.006	0.015	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01
Question Significant	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	
	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	0.003	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	
Question Significant	Q18	Q19	Q20	Q21	Q22	Q23	Q24	Q25	
	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	0.002	<0.001	

**Table 2. Reliability Test Results**

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of statement
0.943	25

**Table 3. Grid of Instruments Used Based on the Digital Ethics Policy of the Ministry of Communication and Information in 2021**

No	Component	Sub-Components
1	Functional aspect	Digital media and social media availability and ownership
2	Internet etiquette	Knowing the importance of applying ethics on the internet Knowing the various community standards that exist on each social media platform helps. When using social media, Understand what should and other digital tools should understand what should and shouldn't be uploaded.
3	Management of information containing hoaxes, hate speech, pornography, bullying, and other negative content.	Knowing the many types of information that may contain hoaxes, hate speech, pornography, bullying, and other harmful stuff. Understand the consequences of creating or disseminating material that contains hoaxes, hate speech, pornography, bullying, and other negative content.
4	Basic knowledge of interacting, participating, and collaborating in the digital space by the rules of digital ethics and applicable regulations.	Knowing how to interact, participate, and collaborate in the digital space by ethical norms and appropriate legislation Understand the various rules that apply when interacting, participating, and collaborating in the digital space.
5	Basic knowledge of interacting and transacting electronically in the digital space in compliance with legal legislation	Knowing the many types of electronic transactions that happen in the digital space by regulatory rules Understand how to interact safely in the digital space electronically.

However, technical data analysis was performed to assess the level of parental ability related to aspects of digital ethics from questionnaire components 2 to 5 by examining the results of the percentage scores obtained using the method provided in table 4 below. Table 4 is used as a guideline for drawing conclusions based on the questionnaire findings for components 2, 3, 4, and 5.

**Table 4. Score Interpretation Criteria**

Percentage	Description
75% - 100%	High
50% - 74,99%	Normal
25% - 49.99%	Low

## Results and Discussion

The findings of this study are based on the responses to the questionnaires that were delivered. The discussion is separated into five sections to make it simpler to understand: (1) functional factors including digital media and social media ownership, (2) Internet etiquette, and (3) information management involving hoaxes, hate speech, pornography, bullying, and content. (4) Fundamental understanding of interacting, participating, and collaborating in the digital space in line with digital ethics norms and applicable regulations; and (5) Fundamental understanding of electronically interacting and transacting in the digital space.

### The Functional Aspects

This component examines parents' ownership and usage of digital media and social media as a foundation for study before moving on to the element of implementing digital ethics. Tables 5, 6, and 7 present the study's results in the form of data in the functional aspect.

**Table 5. Devices to access the internet**

Option	Answer	Percentage
Mobile phone	29	53.70 %
Mobile phone, computer	1	1.85 %
Mobile phone, laptop	18	33.33 %
Mobile phone, computer, laptop	2	3.70 %
Mobile phone, laptop, tablet	4	7.41 %
Total	54	100

According to table 5, all respondents own a cellphone/mobile phone and utilize it to connect to the internet. It also discusses how, at the present, mobile phones can accommodate a range of digital media demands while being more practical in terms of size and usage. Mobile phones are increasingly being utilized for digital activities such as sending messages and browsing social media. Optimizing the use of mobile phones is also very dependent on the owner, which means that the value of mobile phone advantages will bring more value to the owner if all of the facilities and functions can be used appropriately and properly (Chuzaimah, Mabrurroh, & Dihan, 2010; Salehudin, 2020).

People are needed to minimize face-to-face activities and move through virtual interactions during the Covid-19 pandemic; therefore the demand for support for electronic media has grown. The competition from various mobile phone brands is similarly diverse. Many brands have developed from various communication companies, with product characteristics that continue to innovate and are available at lower rates than previously (Sholikhah, Santoso, & Hermawan, 2021). This might also explain why all respondents use a mobile phone to access the internet. Furthermore, the simultaneous ownership of mobile phones and computers as a method for accessing the internet placed 2nd (33.33 %). In today's

world, laptops have evolved into electronic items that are widely used not just for work but also for educational media, entertainment, and internet access.

We examined the respondents' places or locations when accessing the internet in addition to their ownership of electronic devices for internet access. As seen in Table 6, the vast majority, as much as 98.15 % of respondents, use the internet at home. It may be stated that the majority of parents at home have easy access to the internet. During the pandemic time, limits on offline activities were placed, and work from home began to become more common, in line with the growing number of home internet network installations, known as wifi (Hamidah, 2020).

**Table 6. Locations to Access the Internet.**

Choices	Answer	Percentage
Home	41	75.93 %
Home, everywhere	1	1.85 %
Home, office	6	11.11 %
Home, office, public place	5	9.26 %
Digital cafe	1	1.85 %
Total	54	100 %

**Table 7. Aspects of Ownership and Function of Digital Media**

Aspect	Choice	Total	Percentage
I bought a personal cell phone, laptop, or tablet for my child.	Yes	27	50%
	No	27	50%
	Total	54	100%
I use digital content as a learning tool for children.	Yes	51	94.44%
	No	3	5.56%
	Total	54	100.00%

According to the study's findings in table 7, there is the same percentage of parents that buy smartphones or personal laptops for their children, which is 50%. Meanwhile, when it comes to using digital content for children's learning facilities, 94.44 % said they did. This is possible because, in this day and time, digital content connected to education is growing, and assisting parents in obtaining the content required to teach their children also shows the good conditions in which the majority of respondents have used digital media effectively. Learning media in the digital world offers several benefits, including being more appealing to children since it is provided in the form of videos, animations, and motion effects, can be played again, and has a beneficial influence on children's comprehension (Neill & Dinh, 2012; Nurweni et al., 2021). Furthermore, the utilization of digital media as a learning tool is well suited for use during the present COVID-19 epidemic (Arifin, Ulfiana, & Admojo, 2020; Saputra & Gunawan, 2021).

### Internet Etiquette

When humans interact directly, they must have ethics or processes that follow norms, and when humans interact in the virtual digital world, digital ethics must be properly considered. The Indonesian government's digital literacy strategy expects people who understand how to interact and use digital space following relevant standards, not only those who have digital abilities. To prevent the negative consequences of unexpected online actions, digital ethics is required (Gani, 2015). This means that all users in the digital space have a moral responsibility to make the virtual world a safe place for anybody to interact,



receive, and provide information without causing harm to others. In this study, respondents were given five statements to determine how well they understood and applied digital ethics. Table 8 displays the results of the assessment for comprehension of online ethics.

**Table 8. Level of Understanding Internet Etiquette**

Criteria	Total	Total
High	37	68.52%
Normal	2	3.70%
Low	15	27.78%
Total	54	100.00%

According to the study's findings, up to 68.52 % had high criteria for understanding aspects of digital ethics. This indicates that respondents in this study's parents are aware of digital ethics, such as controlling digital content that children may access, accompanying children when accessing digital space, and knowing the laws and age restrictions in the usage of social media. The possession of electronic devices demonstrates the accessibility of internet access. The convenience of network access, which has been mentioned in the functional aspect, must surely be complemented with a thorough awareness of online ethics and parents must explain it to their children.

Children's sense of online ethics is heavily impacted by those closest to them, particularly their parents. Parents must be able to wisely regulate their children's usage of digital media and the internet. The goodness or badness of content in the digital world is determined not only by the content itself but also by how the content impacts the children themselves after viewing it (Ananto et al., 2017; Hosokawa & Katsura, 2018). Furthermore, several studies have been undertaken that demonstrate that the association between the usage of mobile phones and electronic gadgets may be favourable or harmful depending on their use. When children use electronic devices to access digital environments, it can have a positive impact on their digital abilities but a negative impact on their social and psychological development (Karlina, Aeni, & Syahid, 2020). The extensive use of mobile phones or computers causes the child to seem disconnected from the real world and deprives them of the social connections required for social development (Hosokawa & Katsura, 2018). As a result, the responsibility of parents in providing digital literacy instruction, particularly digital ethics, to their children is critical.

According to the research findings, 3.7% had average criteria for understanding digital literacy, while 27.78 % have low criteria. One factor to consider is the present generation's lack of parental awareness of digital ethics. It is not only hoped for but also required, that parents be prepared to become digital literacy-aware parents and give understanding to their children. These findings show that there are still parents who do not understand online etiquette, do not fully assist, and don't control what digital space content their children may view.

### **Negative Information and Content Management**

The dissemination of information and communication flows is easier and faster in today's digital age. However, the type of information available in the digital space via the internet includes both positive and bad content. In-Law No. 11 of 2008 concerning Information and Electronic Transactions, as amended by Law No. 19 of 2016 (UU ITE), negative or illegal content is defined as information and/or electronic documents with content that violates decency, gambling, insults or defamation, extortion and/or threats, and the spread of false and misleading news that results in user losses. Furthermore, negative content

is described as a substance that promotes hatred or enmity based on ethnicity, religion, race, or class. Of course, this is important for parents to be aware of to protect their children from being exposed to negative content that is easily available. We assessed parents' capacity to understand the management of negative information and content using the ten statements in the questionnaire, and the findings are displayed in Table 9 below.

**Table 9. Findings from a Survey on Negative Information and Content Management**

Criteria	Total	Percentage
High	50	92.59%
Normal	4	7.41%
Low	0	0.00%
Total	54	100.00%

According to the study's findings, 92.59 percent of respondents had a good understanding of how to manage information and negative content. This indicates that respondents have a good understanding of what content can be accessed and uploaded to social media, how to choose the right information, what type of content is appropriate for children in elementary school, how to tell the difference between false information and actual news, and the consequences of spreading negative content in the digital space. This component of information management is critical since respondents not only operate as digital content consumers but also as content creators in the digital space, which requires the uploading of high-quality content. Despite government efforts to filter out undesirable content on the internet, the job of parents is to be at the forefront for children (Kominfo & Siberkreas, 2021).

Some actions that parents can take to filter negative content include using parental control apps, features on social media that are specifically for children's ages, making rules at home regarding screen time and other things related to access to digital spaces, but the most important thing is to establish communication and closeness with children, so kids can be comfortable and open, resulting in a good bond and children wanting to. Being a parent in the digital age is difficult.

One of the issues for users of the digital space is the spread of false information and content, including hoaxes. To detect hoaxes, information must be screened. When information is collected, the essential thing is to sort and choose. There are various applications or features that can be used to determine whether the information or news is true or not, such as websites to spot hoaxes (cekfact.com and stop hoax.id), or the simplest option is to search for the truth using the Google search application (Kominfo & Kreasi, 2020). The second checks whether the information is correct or not by applying the relevant standards. The final step is to determine whether the information will be beneficial to others. If it is not regarded as valuable to others, the information is sufficient to stop us and prevent it from being distributed. Because anything downloaded into the digital domain has a digital footprint that must be accounted for. To avoid misperceptions, we must become willing to read material comprehensively and thoroughly, rather than just part-by-part, to anticipate hoaxes.

### **Basic Understanding of Digital Interaction, Participation, and Collaboration, Parental Control Applications**

The presence of social media in our society today facilitates communication and information access. Users can simply communicate and participate in receiving and sending/uploading information via social media. In this situation, the user also serves to create digital content. The development of social media nowadays is rapid, not only in terms

of diversity and number but also in terms of the features and complexity they provide. According to research, 59% of the Indonesian population owns and utilizes social media between April 2019 and January 2020 (Hootsuite & Wearesocial, 2020). The development of social media must be accompanied by an awareness of how we interact, participate, and collaborate in the digital space in compliance with applicable regulations and norms. To test this skill, we examine respondents using six statements from the questionnaire that they must select, with the scoring results shown in Table 10 below.

**Tabel 10. Basic Understanding of Digital Interaction, Participation, and Collaboration in the Digital Space in Line With Digital Ethics Norms and Applicable Regulations**

Criteria	Total	Percentage
High	44	81.48 %
Average	10	18.52 %
Poor	0	0 %
Total	54	100 %

According to the study's findings, there are 81.48 percent high criterion and 18.52 percent average criteria on consumer awareness of the fundamentals of interacting, participating, and collaborating in the digital environment in compliance with applicable regulations and norms. Each social media platform has its own set of regulations that must be accepted by potential users when they create a new account for the first time. This is an early preventive action to ensure that social media users understand the game's rules by the applicable regulations. Positively structured participation, collaboration, and interactive activities in the digital space might be a good system to ward off various negative information attacks that are freely available on the internet. As a result, if you engage in negative contacts, participation, and collaboration, it might lead to something wrong and be tied to the legal sphere, because the rule of law in the digital world is governed by ITE Law.

### Basic Knowledge of Interacting and Transacting Electronically in the Digital Space

The amount of electronic engagement and transaction activity in the digital space has grown. According to statistics, 93 percent of Indonesian internet users have searched for items or services online, 90 percent have visited online shopping, and 88 percent have made online transactions, with 80 percent using smartphones (Hootsuite & Wearesocial, 2020). Even this growth must be accompanied by knowledge of how to transact safely in the digital space. Table 11 shows the findings of three statements that describe how knowledge about digital interactions and transactions is measured.

**Table 11. Fundamental Understanding of Interacting and Transacting in the Digital Space by Applicable Norms and Rules**

Criteria	Total	Percentage
High	46	85.18 %
Normal	8	14.81 %
Total	0	0 %
Total	54	100 %

According to the findings, 85.18 percent of respondents had high criteria in a basic understanding of engaging and transacting electronically in the digital domain in compliance with applicable legislation and norms, while 14.81 percent had average criteria. This indicates that the majority of respondents have high standards and, on average, understand the different forms of electronic transactions and digital account security systems. The activity of conducting online buying and selling transactions in e-commerce is perceived as



simple because it is simply accessible and does not waste time. However, with all of the benefits provided, there remains the possibility of fraud emerging in the digital space, with the most typical types of fraud involving payment systems that employ digital money and fraud connected to the authenticity of products sold online (Dewi & Luh Putu Mahyuni, 2020).

## Conclusion

According to the findings of the research, the competence of parents to understand digital literacy and ethics as a provision for children's education at home is in the high category. This suggests that the government's strategy on digital literacy and ethics has been implemented and understood by the parents who participated in this survey. Furthermore, the functional characteristics include a high infrastructure for accessing the internet at home, demonstrating the convenience of accessing the internet or digital media.

## Recommendation

The findings of this study are designed to provide parents, teachers, and policymakers with an example of the present high usage of digital space connected to the use of social media and digital transactions. This progress must be accompanied by a thorough understanding of how digital ethics are implemented to avoid any unwanted consequences. As a result, suggestions to the government and policymakers for a specific elaboration or socialization connected to the relevance of digital ethics education are also introduced in the world of education, particularly for elementary school-age children, who may access digital space at that age.

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