
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Digital Parenting in the Urban Millennial Era: Social Change in Young Parents' Child-Rearing Practices Using Mobile Touch Screen Devices in Makassar, Indonesia

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| ABSTRACT

In the digital era, parenting methodologies are experiencing considerable evolution, especially within metropolitan millennial households. The extensive utilization of Mobile Touch Screen Devices (MTSDs) has transformed parental interaction and child-rearing practices. In Makassar, Indonesia, a culturally affluent yet swiftly modernizing city, young parents progressively incorporate MTSDs into their daily parenting practices. Nevertheless, scant study investigates the intersection of this shift with conventional child-rearing standards. This study examines the justifications, interactional changes, and cultural debates related to MTSD utilization in parenting among young urban parents. Utilizing a qualitative case study encompassing interviews, observations, and document analysis, we elucidate the application of MTSDs as educational instruments, behavioral facilitators, and pragmatic solutions to contemporary life challenges. The findings indicate a transformation in parenting responsibilities and conventions, characterized by cultural adaptability and emotional ambivalence. This study emphasizes the necessity for equitable digital parenting strategies and advocates for additional research into its long-term developmental and sociocultural effects.

| KEYWORDS

Digital Parenting; Mobile Touch Screen Devices (MTSDs); Urban Millennial Families; Cultural Adaptation; Parent-Child Interaction

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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INTRODUCTION

The modern digital era has significantly transformed conventional parenting methods globally through the convergence of technology and family life (Argandoña et al., 2021; Ceia et al., 2021; Rahimi & Oh, 2024). Mobile Touch Screen Devices (MTSDs), including smartphones and tablets, have become integral to daily routines, shaping parental communication, education, and entertainment for their children. As digital technology becomes increasingly prevalent, especially among millennial parents, mobile devices have evolved from mere communication tools to instruments of parenting, frequently functioning as educational resources, behavioral regulators, and emotional soothers in contemporary households (Manolopoulou, 2025; Mitev et al., 2024; Aslan & Turgut, 2024).

Digital parenting has arisen globally as a sociological phenomena characterized by the use of digital tools into the child-rearing process (Lim & Wang, 2024; Banić & Orehovački, 2024). This revolution is intricately linked to extensive societal changes driven by technological innovation, urbanization, and evolving cultural norms. Parents, contending with intricate job schedules, urban living, and shifting societal norms, utilize mobile devices for the convenience and immediacy of overseeing their children's actions and behaviors (Tang et al., 2022; Nawaz et al., 2024; Liu, 2024; Bakuri & Amoabeng, 2023). Nonetheless, accompanying these conveniences is an escalating apprehension regarding the ramifications of digital dependency on children's psychosocial development, parental involvement, and familial dynamics.

Indonesia, a nation undergoing a swift digital transition, has reached unprecedented levels of mobile device penetration. The Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association reports that more than 215 million people are online, predominantly utilizing smartphones to access digital platforms (Hidayat et al., 2022; Rahman et al., 2024; Iwana et al., 2022). The age demographics of 25–34 and 35–44 years, which include most young and millennial parents, are the greatest sector of internet users. This trend is

especially pronounced in urban centers like Makassar. With young families' growing adoption of digital life, their parenting practices are more influenced by touchscreen technology (Rahma et al., 2021; Waruwu, 2022; Hum et al., 2025).

The implementation of MTSDs in parenting has enhanced access to digital platforms like YouTube Kids, Khan Academy Kids, Duolingo, and Toca Boca, which are intended to promote early childhood education and development (Liszkai-Peres et al., 2024; Turvill et al., 2024). Parents in urban environments frequently utilize these technologies not only for educational purposes but also to engage their children during periods of distraction or when in-person engagement is restricted. These devices perform a dual role, functioning as "digital babysitters" while enabling parents to attend to professional or home responsibilities (Luo, 2022; Murray, 2021; Dumitrescu et al., 2022).

The parenting paradigm is seeing substantial transformation in Makassar, a city that embodies both traditional Bugis-Makassar values and swift industrialization. Historically, parenting in this region has prioritized intergenerational participation, communal principles, and the oral conveyance of ethical lessons (Jamilah et al., 2025; Susylawati et al., 2024; Riza & Mulasi, 2024). Nevertheless, with the growing dependence on MTSDs, numerous young parents are transitioning from culturally ingrained caring methods to more personalized, screen-based strategies. This indicates a broader shift in technology utilization, socialization methods, identity development, and the significance of parental involvement (Willett, 2025; Nolan et al., 2022; Chen et al.).

Recent research (Tu et al., 2024; Rai et al., 2023; Gath et al., 2023) has emphasized that early screen exposure might impair parent-child interactions and adversely impact children's socio-cognitive development. Although these studies provide essential insights, they frequently concentrate on Western contexts and regard digital parenting primarily as a media-impact issue rather than a multifaceted socio-cultural adaptation. Furthermore, there is no focus on the manifestation of these transformations inside metropolitan Southeast Asian environments where digital and traditional norms coexist.

Despite the expanding body of literature on digital parenting, empirical research that rigorously investigates the specific experiences of young urban parents in Indonesia, especially with MTSD usage, remains limited (Hou et al., 2024; Lamabawa et al., 2025). Most current studies are either psychologically oriented, concentrating on screen-time restrictions and developmental consequences, or technologically focused, examining digital literacy and accessibility. A notable deficiency exists in comprehending the social aspects of digital parenting within metropolitan Indonesian settings, particularly with the intersection of cultural expectations, parental reasoning, and the reconfiguration of familial connection patterns.

In Makassar, there is a lack of academic focus on how young parents adapt to changes in child-rearing practices. How can these parents harmonize traditional values with the practicality of modern devices? What rationales justify their decisions to implement MTSDs at specific developmental phases? How does this transition affect the intensity and quality of parent-child interactions? Furthermore, although national discussions highlight awareness of screen time, there is limited exploration of how mobile technology and social media transform parental ideas, behaviors, and family power dynamics at the micro-social level.

This disparity becomes particularly pronounced when examining the increasing prevalence of early childhood exposure to mobile devices. Local study data reveal that more than 57% of children in Makassar are exposed to mobile devices before their first birthday, with some commencing usage as early as two months of age. Nonetheless, these metrics frequently lack qualitative depth in elucidating the social processes and cultural considerations underlying these statistics. Therefore, research must explore the lived experiences, motivations, and repercussions of MTSD-driven parenting within Indonesia's urban millennial demographic.

This study seeks to address the identified gap by examining the utilization of Mobile Touch Screen Devices (MTSDs) by young parents in Makassar within their parenting practices and the implications for broader social transformation. This research used a qualitative case study methodology to examine the socio-cultural, emotional, and intellectual aspects of digital parenting within an urban Indonesian context. The study investigates through comprehensive interviews, participant observations, and document analysis:

1. The underlying factors driving young parents to adopt MTSDs as parenting tools.
2. The processes through which digital parenting practices emerge, stabilize, or evolve.
3. The consequences of screen-mediated parenting on parent-child interaction and the child's social development.

This study situates digital parenting within the broader contexts of social change and rational action, as theorized by Max Weber, alongside ecological systems theory by Bronfenbrenner. It provides a novel perspective on the transformation of parenting in a technologically saturated and culturally hybrid society. It underscores both the adaptation tactics of young parents and the developing contradictions between tradition and modernity in parenting discourse.

This research enhances the field of digital sociology and child development by providing a contextually rich, empirically substantiated account of digital parenting in Makassar. The text posits that young parents' utilization of MTSDs transcends basic functional convenience, representing a sensible social action influenced by cultural norms, economic limitations, and technology capabilities. The results will guide subsequent studies, policy formulation, and public dialogue around digital parenting in Southeast Asia and beyond.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

2.1. Research Design

This study employs a qualitative methodology rooted in the interpretivist framework, highlighting individuals' subjective meanings and lived experiences within their social surroundings. This research used a case study design to facilitate a comprehensive examination of the integration of Mobile Touch Screen Devices (MTSDs) into the parenting practices of young parents in Makassar, Indonesia. This style is appropriate for analyzing intricate social phenomena like digital parenting, which is intricately linked to cultural norms, technological accessibility, and shifting generational values. The interpretivist perspective enables the researcher to elucidate the intricate rationales, emotions, and decision-making processes underlying parental action, surpassing the insights provided by quantitative metrics. The study examines the distinct sociocultural context of metropolitan Makassar, highlighting regional patterns of social development and how parents reconcile tradition and technology in child-rearing. This design guarantees a comprehensive, contextual comprehension of digital parenting practices in the millennial age.

2.2. Research Site and Context

This study was conducted in Makassar City, the capital of South Sulawesi, Indonesia, characterized by swift technological integration and entrenched cultural traditions. Makassar, one of Indonesia's largest urban areas, hosts a diversified, digitally connected populace, especially among millennial parents aged 20 to 40, who are significantly engaged with mobile technology. The city embodies a distinctive cultural hybridity, wherein Bugis-Makassar traditional parenting values, including social responsibility and reverence for elders, combine with contemporary, personalized metropolitan lifestyles. This contrast provides a significant context for examining alterations in parenting methods. The rising digital penetration in Makassar, facilitated by extensive internet access and mobile device ownership, renders it an optimal environment for investigating the phenomena of digital parenting. The site was chosen to examine the convergence of technical advancement and sociocultural tradition, providing valuable insights into how young urban parents adapt to and justify using Mobile Touch Screen Devices (MTSDs) in child-rearing.

2.3. Participants and Sampling

The study's target demographic comprised young parents aged 20 to 40 years who are raising children aged 4 to 10 in urban Makassar. These parents embody a generation actively engaging with the digital revolution and shifting social norms in child-rearing. Purposive sampling was utilized to identify participants who fulfilled particular criteria: active parenting of school-aged children, consistent use of Mobile Touch Screen Devices (MTSDs) in parenting, and readiness to contemplate their experiences. Fifteen participants were involved, consisting of an equitable representation of mothers and fathers from various socioeconomic backgrounds and professions, including educators, homemakers, entrepreneurs, and office employees. This diversity enhanced the data by encompassing many perspectives on digital parenting. Ethical guidelines were rigorously adhered to, with all subjects granting informed consent. Pseudonyms were employed in data presentation to guarantee anonymity and confidentiality, and personal identifiers were excluded from all transcripts and reports.

Figure 1. Distribution of Participants by Occupation

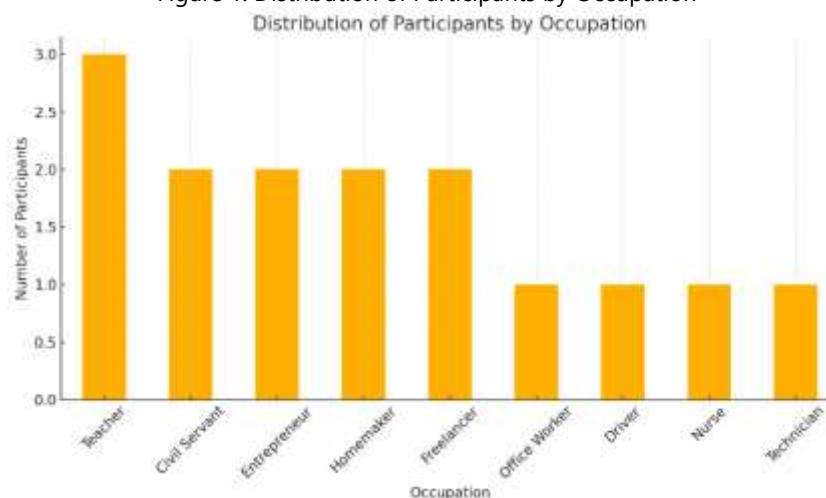


Figure 1, headed "Distribution of Participants by Occupation," depicts the occupational backgrounds of the study's participants. The predominant participants were teachers and freelancers, followed by homemakers, civil servants, and entrepreneurs. This variety illustrates the multifaceted economic roles of young parents in urban Makassar, highlighting that digital parenting habits transcend social class and profession. This variability enriches the study's depth by facilitating the examination of MTSD

utilization across various daily routines and work-life obligations, providing a comprehensive understanding of how urban parents incorporate digital tools into child-rearing.

Figure 2. Frequency of MTSD Use in Parenting
Frequency of MTSD Use in Parenting

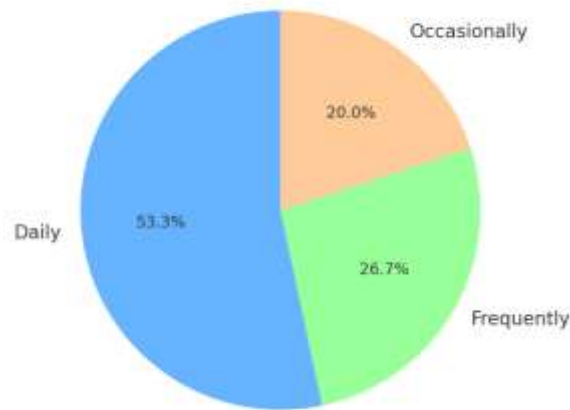


Figure 2, entitled "Frequency of MTSD Use in Parenting," illustrates the frequency with which participants indicated the utilization of mobile touch screen devices in their parenting practices. A majority (60%) utilize MTSDs everyday, while others employ them frequently (26.7%) or rarely (13.3%). This distribution underscores the significant digital participation of young urban parents in Makassar. The prevalence of everyday users indicates the normality of MTSDs as parental instruments employed for teaching, amusement, or behavioral regulation. The data prompts essential inquiries regarding the impact of digital routines on parenting choices, the quality of interactions, and children's developmental results in a technology-dominated context.

Table 1. Participant Profile Table

Participant ID	Gender	Age	Occupation	Device Usage Frequency
P1	Female	28	Teacher	Daily
P2	Male	35	Civil Servant	Daily
P3	Female	30	Entrepreneur	Daily
P4	Male	32	Office Worker	Occasionally
P5	Female	29	Homemaker	Daily
P6	Female	33	Teacher	Frequently
P7	Male	31	Freelancer	Daily
P8	Female	27	Homemaker	Occasionally
P9	Male	34	Entrepreneur	Frequently
P10	Male	36	Civil Servant	Daily
P11	Female	30	Teacher	Frequently
P12	Female	29	Freelancer	Daily
P13	Male	37	Driver	Occasionally
P14	Female	26	Nurse	Frequently
P15	Male	38	Technician	Daily

Table 1, entitled "Participant Profile Table," provides comprehensive demographic and employment data for the 15 young parents participating in this study. Participants were chosen using purposive sampling, considering age (20–40 years), parenting experience, and utilization of Mobile Touch Screen Devices (MTSDs). The table comprises columns for gender, age, occupation, and frequency of MTSD utilization in parenting. This varied participant profile, including homemakers, educators, public

professionals, and freelancers, guarantees a comprehensive contextual insight into digital parenting behaviors. The incorporation of diverse usage patterns (daily, frequent, and occasional) facilitates thorough insights into behavioral trends and motivations.

4. Data Collection Techniques

The data for this study were collected through three qualitative methods to ensure a comprehensive and triangulated understanding of digital parenting behaviors. Initially, comprehensive interviews were performed using a semi-structured method, enabling participants to convey personal experiences while ensuring responses were consistent. The interview protocol (refer to Appendix) concentrated on parenting practices, motivations for MTSD utilization, and perceived effects on child behavior and development. Secondly, participant observation was conducted in domestic settings to record real-time interactions between parents and children. Field notes documented behavioral patterns, device usage frequency, and communication's emotional nuances. This approach provided contextual support for verbal narratives given during interviews. Third, document analysis was utilized to scrutinize artifacts, including educational applications utilized by parents, regional parenting blogs, and media coverage regarding screen-time culture. These materials offered insights into the wider societal discourse and parental effects, enhancing the dataset and bolstering the reliability of findings through methodological triangulation.

5. Data Analysis Procedure

This study utilized theme analysis based on the framework established by Braun and Clarke (2006) to examine qualitative data methodically. The procedure encompassed six essential stages: data familiarization, first coding, theme identification, theme evaluation, theme definition and nomenclature, and report generation. Interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents were systematically coded utilizing a structured framework to identify repeating patterns and meanings. The investigation concentrated on three principal dimensions: (1) the justification of MTSD utilization by young parents, (2) evolving parenting standards within urban familial frameworks, and (3) cultural conflicts and adjustments stemming from the convergence of traditional Bugis-Makassar values with digital practices. Codes were categorized into overarching themes and distilled into fundamental concepts that encapsulate the principal findings of the investigation. Although no automation was employed, manual coding facilitated enhanced researcher engagement and a more nuanced assessment of the contextual aspects inherent in participants' narratives and behaviors.

6. Trustworthiness and Rigor

Many methodologies were utilized to guarantee the reliability and robustness of the study. Triangulation was accomplished by gathering data from many sources—interviews, participant observations, and document analysis—to validate conclusions. Member verification was performed by presenting synthesis results to selected participants for validation, hence boosting trustworthiness. The researcher upheld reflexivity during the process, recognizing personal biases and their possible impact on data interpretation. An audit trail was established to capture critical decisions, coding procedures, and analytical insights, so ensuring transparency and facilitating replication. This integrated approach enhanced the qualitative investigation's validity, reliability, and interpretive richness.

7. Ethical Considerations

This research had formal permission from the Ethical Review Board of Universitas Negeri Makassar, guaranteeing compliance with ethical research norms. All participants received comprehensive information regarding the study's objectives, procedures, and their rights, including voluntary participation and the option to quit at any moment without repercussions. To safeguard participant welfare, interviews were conducted respectfully and unobtrusively. Data confidentiality was preserved by the implementation of pseudonyms and the secure storage of all study materials. The final study excluded personal identifiers, and the data were utilized exclusively for academic and research purposes.

RESULT

3.1. Factors Influencing MTSD Use in Parenting

The utilization of Mobile Touch Screen Devices (MTSDs) in parenting among young urban parents in Makassar is influenced by many interrelated factors. Parental employment obligations and time limitations are among the most significant factors. Many participants, especially dual-income parents, reported challenges in reconciling career commitments with caregiving duties. Consequently, MTSDs are frequently utilized as effective instruments to occupy or interest youngsters during parental absence. An additional significant factor is the perception of MTSDs as both pedagogical and soothing instruments. Parents indicated utilizing applications and digital resources, like YouTube Kids, Khan Academy Kids, and Duolingo, to enhance their children's education and growth. Concurrently, MTSDs function as behavioral regulators to soothe children or control tantrums in both public and private environments.

The accessibility and affordability of MTSD facilitate its inclusion into everyday parenting activities. Due to extensive internet access and the ubiquity of economical mobile devices, MTSDs can be readily integrated into households across diverse income brackets.

The impact of peer groups and internet communities is significant. Numerous parents embraced specific applications or digital practices influenced by suggestions from acquaintances, parenting forums, or social media, underscoring the impact of communal digital culture on contemporary parenting standards.

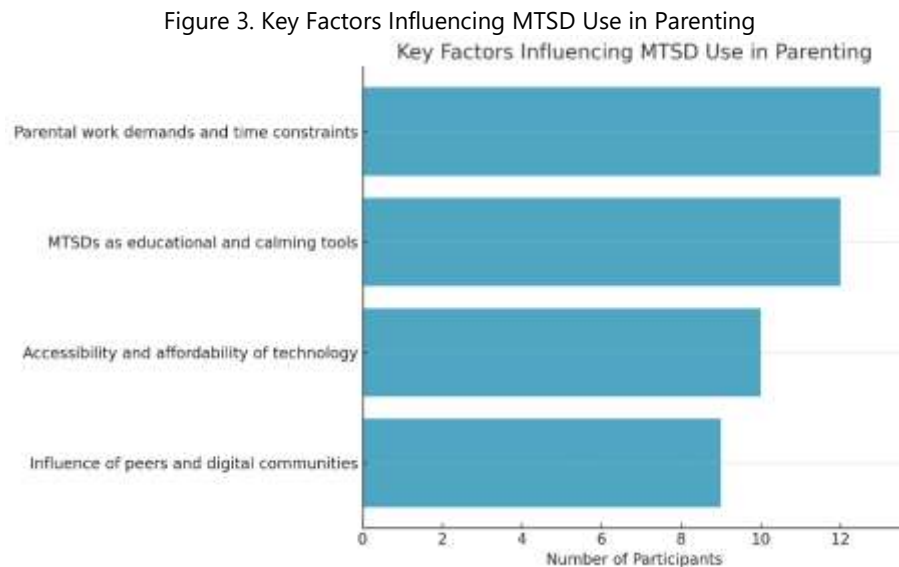


Figure 3, entitled "Key Factors Influencing MTSD Use in Parenting," visually illustrates the frequency of participant references for each influencing element. The primary cause is parental job pressures, acknowledged by nearly all participants, reflecting a persistent challenge in reconciling professional and caregiving obligations. The perception of MTSDs as educational tools is gaining traction, indicating that parents are increasingly placing their trust in digital resources for child learning and behavior control. Accessibility and peer influence were significant factors. This figure illustrates that technology utilization in parenting serves as both an individual tactic and a socially endorsed practice.

Table 2. Factors Influencing MTSD Use Table

Factors	Mentions by Participants (n=15)	Key Themes
Parental work demands and time constraints	13	Time-saving necessity
MTSDs as educational and calming tools	12	Dual-function for learning and behavior control
Accessibility and affordability of technology	10	Ubiquitous device ownership
Influence of peers and digital communities	9	Social recommendation and influence

The table entitled "Factors Influencing MTSD Use Table" encapsulates four principal themes identified as catalysts for the adoption of Mobile Touch Screen Devices (MTSDs) by young parents in their parenting practices. Of the 15 participants, 13 identified job demands and time limits as the principal reasons, underscoring the function of MTSDs as time-efficient solutions during hectic schedules. The second most cited feature was the dual role of MTSDs as both instructional and soothing instruments, noted by 12 parents. Accessibility, cost, and peer influence were major considerations, with 10 and 9 people identifying them as enablers, respectively. These findings illustrate a synthesis of practical necessity and socio-cultural adaptation in urban digital parenting.

3.2. Shifting Patterns of Parent-Child Interaction

The utilization of Mobile Touch Screen Devices (MTSDs) has profoundly transformed the dynamics of parent-child contact within metropolitan homes. A prominent change is the replacement of direct interaction with screen-mediated communication. A multitude of young parents indicated dependence on MTSDs to engage or calm their children, especially during periods of

exhaustion or while handling domestic duties. This replacement frequently supplants conventional activities like storytelling, communal meals, or outdoor play, resulting in increased solitary screen time for the youngster.

Consequently, there has been a significant decline in the time and quality of in-person engagement. Numerous individuals voiced apprehension over diminished verbal interaction and emotional connection, acknowledging that although children are physically proximate, substantial engagement is frequently constrained in the presence of screens.

Nonetheless, a more intricate pattern is also becoming apparent. Certain parents delineated co-engagement activities, such as viewing instructional movies collaboratively or participating in interactive games together. These collective digital experiences are regarded as avenues for connection and structured education. Although not synonymous with conventional exchanges, co-engagement with MTSDs demonstrates parents' attempts to stay engaged in their children's digital pursuits. It also exemplifies a sort of adaptive parenting, wherein screen time is transformed into a communal rather than solitary experience.

Figure 4. Shifting Patterns of Parent-Child Interaction

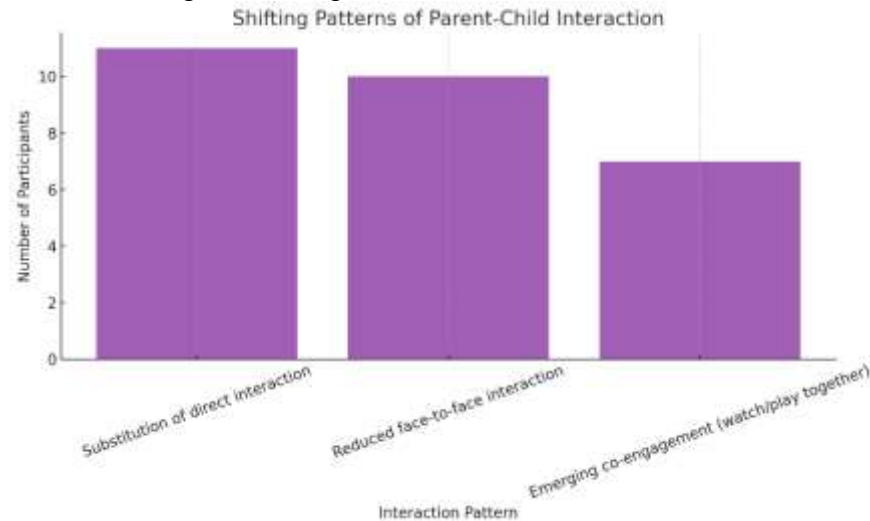


Figure 4, entitled "Shifting Patterns of Parent-Child Interaction," depicts the ways in which various forms of digital interaction are transforming parental dynamics. The predominant trend observed is the substitution of conventional interaction with screen time, indicating a transition towards passive, technology-mediated caring. This is accompanied by a decline in in-person interactions, underscoring the unintended outcome of digital convenience. The emergence of co-engagement (e.g., concurrently viewing or interacting with digital content) fosters a more collaborative application of technology. These changes indicate a societal adjustment, as parents strive to reconcile emotional bonds with contemporary digital reality.

Table 3. Shifting Parent-Child Interaction Table

Interaction Pattern	Number of Participants Reporting	Observed Impact
Substitution of direct interaction	11	Increased child independence, less parental dialogue
Reduced face-to-face interaction	10	Decreased verbal and emotional bonding time
Emerging co-engagement (watch/play together)	7	Opportunities for guided learning and bonding

The "Shifting Parent-Child Interaction Table" delineates significant changes in young parents' interactions with their children when Mobile Touch Screen Devices (MTSDs) are present. Most parents (11 out of 15) indicated that they frequently replaced direct interaction with screen-based engagement to optimize time or alleviate stress. This substitution generally results in heightened kid independence while constraining linguistic and emotional connection. Simultaneously, 10 participants observed a decline in face-to-face interactions, voicing apprehension regarding diminished quality bonding time. Seven parents notably reported co-engagement habits, wherein screen time transforms into a collective experience, providing a contemporary means for guided involvement and digital connection.

3. Cultural Tensions and Parenting Rationality

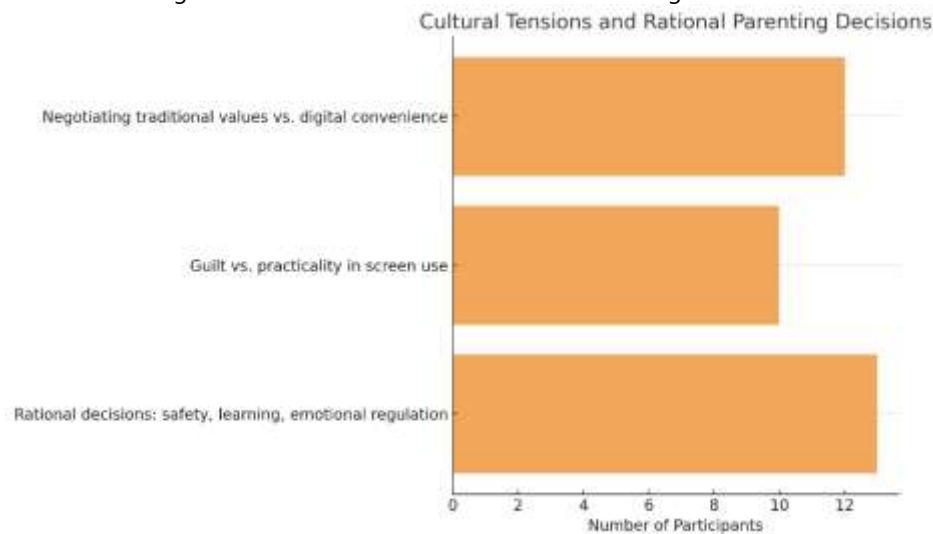
Incorporating Mobile Touch Screen Devices (MTSDs) into the parenting practices of young parents in Makassar has generated considerable cultural tensions, particularly as they navigate the dichotomy between traditional Bugis-Makassar parenting principles and the ease afforded by contemporary technology. Historically, parenting within this cultural framework prioritized

communal caregiving, direct engagement, moral narratives, and emotional intimacy. Many participants disclosed that the exigencies of urban living, constrained time, and the stresses of contemporary employment had compelled them to depend on MTSDs, frequently conflicting with traditional cultural norms.

This transition has engendered emotional ambiguity, as parents often articulate remorse regarding excessive screen time while concurrently rationalizing it as a required compromise. The devices were perceived as pragmatic instruments for exerting control, regulating behavior, or ensuring the kids interest when conventional parenting techniques were impractical.

These judgments are typically sensible and intentional, made with regard for the child's safety, educational enhancement, and emotional stability. Instead of indicating neglect or cultural abandonment, the employment of MTSD by these parents signifies a deliberate adaptation—a practical strategy for parenting within contemporary limitations. This justification corresponds with Max Weber's idea of purposeful action (Zweckrationalität), wherein parental decisions are motivated by results considered most efficient and advantageous.

Figure 5. Cultural Tensions and Rational Parenting Decisions



The horizontal bar chart entitled "Cultural Tensions and Rational Parenting Decisions" illustrates the prevalence of each theme expressed by participants. The predominant theme identified was rational decision-making, with 13 parents reporting intentional use of MTSD for educational and emotional objectives. This is closely succeeded by the debate between traditional ideals and contemporary convenience, highlighting the cultural tension encountered by numerous young parents. The conflict between guilt and practicality surfaced as a significant issue, illustrating the psychological intricacies of parenting in the digital era. The figure illustrates the interplay between culture and rationality in influencing digital parenting decisions.

Table 4. Cultural Tensions and Rationality Table

Cultural Tension Theme	Number of Participants Reporting	Interpretation
Negotiating traditional values vs. digital convenience	12	Parents balance heritage values with modern demands
Guilt vs. practicality in screen use	10	Emotional conflict between ideal parenting and digital reliance
Rational decisions: safety, learning, emotional regulation	13	Intentional use of MTSDs based on perceived child benefit

The "Cultural Tensions and Rationality Table" delineates three prevailing themes that demonstrate how young parents in Makassar maneuver the intricate interplay between cultural tradition and digital parenting. Twelve participants indicated a continuous negotiation between traditional Bugis-Makassar values and digital convenience, reconciling cultural norms with contemporary challenges. Ten parents articulated an internal conflict between guilt and realism, frequently finding it challenging to align ideal parenting methods with the reality of dependence on screens. Thirteen participants asserted that their utilization of MTSDs was a deliberate and reasoned decision, rooted on considerations of safety, education, and emotional regulation. These observations underscore a pragmatic parenting rationale influenced by cultural heritage and contemporary existence.

DISCUSSION

4.1. The Rationalization of Digital Parenting

The results of this study strongly correspond with Max Weber's notion of goal-oriented rationality (*Zweckrationalität*), which interprets human activities as deliberate endeavors to attain particular objectives. Among young urban parents in Makassar, the utilization of Mobile Touch Screen Devices (MTSDs) in parenting is a calculated, efficiency-oriented decision designed to optimize limited time, ensure child safety, facilitate learning, and regulate emotional behavior (Mallawaarachchi et al., 2022; Aslan & Turgut, 2024; Covolo et al., 2021). Parents exhibited a distinct understanding of the trade-offs involved, yet rationalized their dependence on MTSDs as the most feasible approach given their socioeconomic and urban limitations.

Urban parents frequently balance full-time employment, household responsibilities, and societal expectations, rendering MTSDs a practical approach for managing daily issues. This pragmatic application of technology signifies a logical adjustment to modern existence, wherein conventional caregiving methods may no longer correspond with the requirements of contemporary life (Jung, 2025; Peng, 2025; Jewell et al., 2025). This rationalization does not imply a dismissal of cultural values; instead, it advocates for the incorporation of digital resources to enhance the efficacy of parenting objectives. Consequently, the utilization of MTSD by young parents exemplifies a deliberate social action—motivated by rationality, necessity, and contemporary urban circumstances—reflecting Weber's idea that individuals engage in strategic behavior to enhance results within intricate settings.

4.2. Reconfiguration of Parenting Norms in Urban Contexts

The growing incorporation of Mobile Touch Screen Devices (MTSDs) into family life has significantly altered parenting practices, especially in metropolitan settings such as Makassar. In Bugis-Makassar culture, child-rearing traditionally prioritizes direct engagement, participation of the extended family, and the oral transmission of values through personal communication and daily practices (Rahma et al., 2021; Sutarto et al., 2022). Nonetheless, these norms are progressively being supplanted—or at least augmented—by screen-based behaviors that provide digital modalities of connection, education, and regulation.

MTSDs have profoundly transformed the role, authority, and involvement of parents. Devices are utilized not alone for amusement and diversion but also to enforce parental control, provide instructional material, and regulate conduct remotely (Alrusaini & Beyari, 2022; Gür & Türel, 2022; Young et al., 2024). This transition has changed the concept of a "present" parent, as digital oversight increasingly supplants physical presence in everyday caregiving. For several metropolitan families, particularly in dual-income or nuclear structures, MTSDs offer adaptable parenting resources in the lack of extended familial assistance.

These modifications underscore a continuous adaptation process in which young parents align old expectations with modern reality. The implementation of MTSDs serves as a pragmatic solution to time constraints, disjointed family dynamics, and the increasing pressures of urban existence, rather than diminishing parental responsibilities.

4.3. Cultural Hybridization and Social Change

The study's findings indicate a process of cultural hybridization, in which young urban parents integrate traditional values with digital habits, rather than completely discarding ancestral norms. This transformation can be comprehended through Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, specifically via the interplay between the macrosystem, encompassing overarching cultural influences such as digital technology, media, and global parenting trends, and the microsystem, where quotidian family interactions and child-rearing occur (Engeström et al., 2024; Jiang, 2024; Kundra et al., 2025). MTSDs, as components of the macrosystem, significantly impact the microsystem, gently altering behaviors, routines, and relational dynamics inside the household.

Parents in Makassar are not renouncing their Bugis-Makassar history; rather, they are modifying cultural values to align with the exigencies and opportunities of the digital age. This is apparent in how parents utilize MTSDs for educational and ethical objectives, integrating contemporary tools with enduring aims of character development and discipline (Yusuf et al., 2023; Agus et al., 2024; Dasopang et al., 2022). A novel parenting persona emerges—technologically adept, pragmatic, and culturally aware—that navigates the intersection of tradition and technology.

This hybrid parenting approach indicates a wider social transformation, as family structures and behaviors adapt to technological progress while remaining grounded in cultural contexts. It illustrates that cultural transition involves integration and reinterpretation rather than mere replacement.

4.4. Implications for Child Development and Socialization

The growing utilization of Mobile Touch Screen Devices (MTSDs) in parenting poses intricate ramifications for child development and socialization. A significant issue is the decline in physical activity and direct social interaction, as youngsters allocate more time to screens rather than engaging with classmates or participating in active play. Numerous parents noted that their children displayed diminished attention spans and decreased vocal communication when extensively exposed to MTSDs. Simultaneously, certain parents indicated favorable educational results, particularly when children engaged with age-appropriate learning materials under supervision.

The conflicting outcomes underscore the dual aspects of digital parenting—its ability to augment learning while simultaneously posing risks of emotional detachment and social underdevelopment. This highlights the significance of equilibrium when screen

time is supplemented by in-person engagement and physical activity. Moreover, parental digital literacy is crucial, enabling parents to judiciously select content, oversee usage, and interact substantively with their children's digital experiences.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the phenomenon of digital parenting in the urban millennial context, concentrating on how young parents in Makassar, Indonesia, integrate Mobile Touch Screen Devices (MTSDs) into their child-rearing activities. The study investigated the fundamental reasons, developing interaction patterns, and cultural ramifications of MTSD utilization within familial contexts, providing insight into the transforming dynamics of parenting in digitally interconnected urban environments.

The data indicate that MTSDs have become essential instruments in the daily lives of young parents, influenced by occupational pressures, time limitations, and the view of gadgets as educational and behavioral supports. Consequently, conventional face-to-face relationships have diminished, yielding to screen-mediated engagement, although several parents employ co-use tactics to maintain meaningful interaction. The study reveals a complex interplay between cultural heritage and technological convenience, wherein parents embrace MTSDs not as a dismissal of tradition but as a sensible adaptation to contemporary life.

Significantly, the utilization of MTSD is not devoid of repercussions. Although it provides cognitive and behavioral advantages when utilized purposefully, excessive dependence may hinder children's social development, emotional connections, and physical activity levels. Parents experience emotional strain as they navigate the conflict between practical necessities and cultural norms alongside parenting aspirations.

This research enhances the conversation on digital sociology and parenting by conceptualizing MTSD usage as a deliberate social activity within a culturally mixed milieu. Future research may further examine the enduring developmental effects of digital parenting and evaluate intergenerational changes in parenting ideologies, especially in culturally diverse and quickly urbanizing environments.

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