



Gadgets as “Kawan Parak”: Exploring YouTube Use, Parental Mediation, and Social Interaction among Children Aged 4-6 Years

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Abstract

This study aims to understand the dynamics of YouTube and digital media use among children aged 4-6 years in Sungai Tandipah Village, Sungai Tabuk District, Banjar Regency, South Kalimantan Province, with a focus on access patterns, parental support, and children's social interactions. The study used a descriptive qualitative approach with an intrinsic case study strategy. Informants consisted of 10 families grouped into three types: families with full-time working parents, families with housewives who use gadgets as a negotiation tool, and families who actively limit screen time. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, passive participant observation, and field notes, then analyzed using thematic analysis. The results showed that gadgets function as “kawan parak” a local term referring to a close companion that accompanies children from morning routines to mealtimes and moments when parents are occupied with work or domestic tasks. However, parental mediation was predominantly passive. Intensive YouTube use was associated with the emergence of “YouTube language,” reduced familiarity with the Banjar mother tongue, emotional outbursts when devices were withdrawn, egocentric behavior, and a shift from traditional play to screen-based peer gatherings.

[Penelitian ini bertujuan memahami dinamika penggunaan YouTube dan media digital pada anak usia 4-6 tahun di Desa Sungai Tandipah, Kecamatan Sungai Tabuk, Kabupaten Banjar, Provinsi Kalimantan Selatan, dengan fokus pada pola akses, pendampingan orang tua, dan interaksi sosial anak. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan strategi studi kasus intrinsik. Informan terdiri atas 10 keluarga yang dikelompokkan menjadi tiga tipe, yaitu keluarga dengan orang tua bekerja penuh waktu, keluarga ibu rumah tangga yang menggunakan gadget sebagai alat negosiasi, dan keluarga yang aktif membatasi waktu layar. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif pasif, dan catatan lapangan, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa gadget berfungsi sebagai “kawan parak” yang menemani anak sejak pagi, saat makan, dan ketika orang tua bekerja. Pendampingan orang tua cenderung pasif, sehingga anak lebih banyak diarahkan oleh pilihan sendiri dan algoritma YouTube. Penggunaan YouTube berkaitan dengan munculnya bahasa YouTube, gagap bahasa ibu, tantrum, egosentrisme,

dan pergeseran permainan tradisional. Penelitian ini menegaskan pentingnya literasi digital keluarga dan pendampingan aktif dalam parenting anak usia dini.]

Keywords: Early Childhood; Digital Parenting; Digital Media; Screen Time; YouTube.

Introduction

Early childhood is a developmental group that requires serious attention because this period is the foundation for the development of children's language, emotional, social, cognitive, and character skills. In this phase, children's experiences at home, school, play environments, and digital spaces are intertwined, shaping their growth and development. The issue of digital media exposure in early childhood needs to be understood not only as a technological issue, but also as an educational and parenting issue. The social change that most strongly impacts the lives of early childhood today is the entry of digital technology into the family room. The Central Statistics Agency (BPS) noted that based on the 2024 Susenas (National Survey), 72.78% of Indonesia's population has access to the internet and 68.65% own or control a mobile phone (Statistik, 2024). Ruhela et.al (2025), stated that more than 33% of US households with children own at least one "Internet of Things" device. The Indonesian government also highlighted that some young children already use mobile phones and access the internet, making child protection in the digital space a crucial agenda for families and the nation (IGID, 2025). This condition shows that gadgets and the internet are no longer exclusive facilities for urban communities, but have reached households in various regions, including suburban and rural areas that are undergoing socio-cultural transition.

The phenomenon of YouTube use among young children cannot be understood simply as a viewing activity. In many families, YouTube is part of their daily parenting strategy. Gadgets are provided to keep children calm, eat, stay home, or prevent them from disrupting their parents' household and economic activities. Data from Noot et al., (2020), found that working mothers provide YouTube access to their children for entertainment, learning, and to keep them calm. These findings suggest that YouTube has entered family parenting practices not only because children want it, but also because parents need a medium that is perceived as fast, practical, and able to distract children. In the context of Sungai Tandipah Village, this phenomenon has local characteristics. Sungai Tandipah Village is a suburban area connecting Banjar Regency with access to Banjarmasin City. The community is in a transition phase from an agrarian lifestyle and river culture to an increasingly digitalized one. Smartphones and internet access have entered family homes, but parents' digital literacy is still unequal. Most parents work in agriculture, small businesses, or are day laborers. Busy work and domestic chores often lead to gadgets being given to children as "kawan parak", close companions who accompany them in the morning, during meals, while their mothers cook, while their parents work, or when the children need comfort (based on the author's observations in Sungai Tandipah Village).

Children's access patterns to YouTube in Sungai Tandipah Village indicate high usage intensity and a strong technical independence. Children aged 4-6 are able to open the app, scroll through screens, skip ads, select videos, and use voice search. Frequently watched content includes children's animations, fast-paced visual entertainment channels, popular educational videos, and toy review videos. This situation suggests that children's operational skills with gadgets are developing faster than their ability to critically understand the content. At this point, the key issue is not simply whether children should or should not use gadgets, but rather how this digital access is managed, supported, and linked to the developmental needs of early childhood.

Indonesian literature shows that parental guidance is a crucial factor in early childhood digital media use. According to Iskandar et al., (2022), parental guidance in digital media use is achieved through appropriate content selection, supervision, consistent implementation of rules, and creative efforts to use digital media with children. Sari & Marnelly (2024), emphasized that digital parenting is

necessary to monitor and control children's smartphone use to protect them from the negative influences of gadget use. However, in the context of families in Sungai Tandipah Village, guidance often remains at the level of passive mediation. Parents feel they are providing guidance because they are in the same room, even though there is not necessarily dialogue, explanation, or active content selection.

This issue is increasingly important because intense gadget use can be associated with changes in children's language, emotional regulation, and social interactions. Priyoambodo & Suminar (2021), found that most of the studies they reviewed showed a negative correlation between exposure to electronic media such as television and gadgets and early childhood language development. Mimin (2022). also concluded that dominant gadget use negatively impacts various aspects of early childhood development, including religious and moral values, physical-motor, cognitive, language, socio-emotional, and artistic aspects. In Sungai Tandipah Village, the language issue is particularly interesting because children grow up in a Banjar-speaking family environment, but the intensity of watching YouTube has led some children to use popular Indonesian with its distinctive vocabulary and intonation.

Beyond language, YouTube use is also associated with changes in children's play patterns and social interactions. Nurhasanah & Yudha (2023), found that gadget use by young children negatively impacts their social interactions. In the context of Sungai Tandipah Village, this change is evident in the shift from traditional games like baasin, marbles, and tag to activities of gathering while watching a screen together. Children still meet with their peers, but the quality of their interactions changes because the primary focus is on the screen, rather than on sharing roles, waiting their turn, negotiating, resolving conflicts, or reading their peers' emotions.

Based on several previous studies, it appears that research on gadgets, YouTube, screen time, and digital parenting in early childhood in Indonesia has progressed. However, several gaps remain to be addressed. *First*, some studies focus more on gadget use in the context of urban families, schools, or families with specific educational backgrounds, while the context of sub-urban villages experiencing a local cultural transition toward digitalization has not been studied in depth (Astuti, Munastiwi, et al., 2022; Dirlam et al., 2026; Sabrina et al., 2025). *Second*, previous studies tend to emphasize the duration of gadget use or the form of parental supervision, but have not addressed the differences between physical supervision and active support in the lives of daily-worker families (Astuti, 2023; Astuti et al., 2025; Yusuf et al., 2020). *Third*, studies on YouTube and children's language generally focus more on vocabulary acquisition, while the phenomenon of YouTube language distancing from the local mother tongue remains rarely explored (Astuti, Hijriyani, et al., 2022; Sukma et al., 2025; Winarji et al., 2026). *Fourth*, the shift from traditional play patterns to screen activities has not been widely interpreted as a problem of early childhood social interaction within the local cultural context (Annisa Aurora et al., 2025; Hamzah & Suratman, 2023; Rizqina et al., 2024). Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of early childhood education and digital parenting studies based on the local Indonesian context. Practically, the research results are expected to serve as a basis for developing family digital literacy education for parents, early childhood education teachers, village cadres, and local policymakers.

Studies on YouTube and digital media use among young children are increasingly important as Indonesian families increasingly navigate the digital ecosystem. In the context of early childhood education, digital technology cannot be immediately positioned as a single threat or an automatic solution. Asmawati (2021), found that the use of digital technology influences the role of parents in supporting young children. This finding suggests that digital technology demands a transformation in the role of parents, from mere providers of facilities to companions, guides, and controllers of children's digital experiences.

In terms of social development, digital parenting is closely related to children's ability to develop prosocial behavior. Hidayati et al., (2023), found that parents who practice digital parenting make agreements about device use, set time limits, accompany their children before and after using devices, and encourage children to return to playing with friends after using gadgets. This finding provides an important comparison for the research in Sungai Tandipah Village, especially since most families in this study had not consistently implemented screen time rules. The literature on screen time and children's language development shows relevant findings. Priyoambodo & Suminar (2021), concluded that most of the studies they reviewed found a negative correlation between electronic media exposure and early childhood language development. However, they also emphasized that children's language development is not solely determined by screens, but also by the quality of stimulation and direct interaction with family. In the context of Sungai Tandipah Village, this finding is important because the children live in Banjar-speaking families, but the intensity of YouTube has led some children to begin using popular Indonesian with vocabulary and intonation typical of digital content. In addition, Shah et al., (2020), stated that excessive screen time also has an impact on decreasing TBUT (Time But Up Time) and lower blink rate in children, which contributes to dry eye disease and inflammatory conjunctivitis.

Based on previous research, four key gaps underlie the novelty of this study. *First*, the context of suburban villages undergoing a local cultural transition toward digitalization has not been studied in depth. *Second*, some studies have not clearly differentiated between physical supervision and active mentoring. *Third*, the phenomenon of YouTube language distancing itself from the local mother tongue is still rarely explored. *Fourth*, the shift from traditional games to screen activities has not been widely interpreted as a social interaction issue for early childhood. This study addresses these gaps by highlighting Sungai Tandipah Village and introducing the concepts of “gadget as *kawan parak* or gadgets as close companions” and “YouTube language and mother tongue stuttering”.

Method

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with an intrinsic case study strategy. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to understand in-depth family experiences, digital parenting patterns, parental guidance practices, and the dynamics of social interactions of children aged 4-6 years in the context of daily life in Sungai Tandipah Village. The intrinsic case study strategy was used because this research focuses on a unique social context, namely Sungai Tandipah Village, Sungai Tabuk District, Banjar Regency, South Kalimantan Province, as a suburban area undergoing a transition from an agrarian or riverine culture to family digitalization. The case studied is not simply the use of YouTube by children, but how YouTube presents itself as a companion in the rhythm of family parenting, especially when parents are working, taking care of domestic chores, or using gadgets as a negotiation tool to calm children.

The research was conducted in Sungai Tandipah Village, a suburban area connecting Banjar Regency with access to Banjarmasin City. This location was chosen purposively because it has socio-cultural characteristics relevant to the research focus. Sungai Tandipah Village is in a phase of cultural and technological transition; smartphone and internet access has entered residents' homes, but parents' digital literacy is not yet widespread. Furthermore, some parents work in agriculture, small businesses, and as day laborers, so gadgets are often given to children to keep them calm, not to disturb their parents' work, or to keep them indoors.

The research informants consisted of 10 families with children aged 4-6 years divided into three types, full-time working fathers and mothers, housewives, and parents who actively supervise gadgets. Informants were selected using purposive sampling based on the following criteria: families with children aged 4-6 years, children having access to YouTube or digital media, parents willing to be

interviewed, and families willing to be observed in the context of daily gadget use. Children aged 4-6 years were the subjects of behavioral observations. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, passive participant observation, and field documentation. Data were analyzed using reflective thematic analysis. Data validity was maintained through source triangulation, technical triangulation, member checking, observation persistence, and audit trails.

Results and Discussion

The research results show that children's gadget usage patterns are closely related to family situations. In Type A families, gadget use is influenced by parents' limited time due to work. In Type B families, gadgets function more as a tool for domestic care. Meanwhile, Type C families serve as a comparison because parents are more aware of limiting screen time and providing alternative activities for children. The research findings demonstrate a thematic relationship between digital access patterns, forms of parental support, and children's social interactions. Children not only use gadgets for entertainment but also make them part of their daily routine. When this use is not accompanied by active support, changes occur in the way children speak, play, respond to others, and manage their emotions.

Access Pattern: Gadgets as “Kawan Parak” from Early Morning

The research results show that children aged 4-6 in Sungai Tandipah Village have high access to smartphones. The gadgets used are generally owned by their mothers, but in some families, children use secondhand devices that have become their exclusive devices. Children start accessing YouTube early in the morning, especially when parents begin work or household chores. In these situations, gadgets are provided to keep children from fussing and disrupting their parents' work. This is where gadgets function as companions, close friends who accompany children from the moment they wake up, during meals, and even during playtime.

Table 1. Children's YouTube Access Patterns Based on Family Type

Type	Dominant Access Times	Access Form	Usage Characteristics
Type A	Morning, noon, and evening when parents are at work.	Children often use their own gadgets.	Use tends to be prolonged and lacks direct supervision.
Type B	Morning when mother is doing housework, mealtimes, and when mother is taking care of younger siblings.	Gadgets are provided according to the mother's needs.	Gadgets become a negotiation tool to get children to eat or stop fussing.
Type C	Specific times are determined by family rules.	Children use gadgets with parental permission.	Time spent on gadgets is more limited, and children are more often directed to non-digital play.

(Based on the results of interviews and observations in Sungai Tandipah Village)

The most intense access patterns are seen in Type A and Type B families. In Type A families, high access occurs because parents are not always at home or cannot directly accompany their children. In Type B families, high access occurs because gadgets are used to assist mothers with household chores. Conversely, Type C families exhibit more controlled access patterns because parents establish usage rules.

Table 2. Forms of Children's Technical Independence in Using YouTube

Technical Independence	Field Findings
Opening apps on your own	Children can access YouTube without parental assistance.
Scrolling through screens	Children are able to select videos from the recommendations that appear.
Skipping ads	Children know the skip button and are accustomed to skipping ads.
Selecting favorite content	Children select channels or videos they find interesting.
Using voice search	Children use keywords for specific games or videos through voice search.
Repeating videos	Children replay videos they like repeatedly.

(Based on the results of interviews and observations in Sungai Tandipah Village)

Children's technical independence demonstrates that they are not merely passive viewers. They are now able to interact with platform features and determine their own viewing preferences. However, this technical ability is not yet matched by the ability to select content, understand messages, or manage duration. As a result, children can be continuously exposed to videos selected by platform recommendations.

Table 3. Types of YouTube Content Most Often Accessed by Children

Content Types	Content Example	Appeal to Children
Children's animation	BabyBus, Cocomelon	Bright colors, repetitive songs, and engaging cartoon characters.
Local religious/educational animation	Nussa Rara	Short stories, moral values, and simple language.
Toy review videos	Unboxing toys	Featuring new toys, surprises, and exciting visuals.
Children's songs	Alphabet, number, and color songs	Easy to follow and repeat.
Short entertainment videos	Animated clips or short videos	Fast paced and easy to catch attention.

(Based on the results of interviews and observations in Sungai Tandipah Village)

The content children access often displays a mix of educational and entertaining content. However, the predominance of videos with fast-paced visuals can lead children to become accustomed to instant stimulation. They may switch from one video to another when bored. This habit can potentially impact their ability to persist in real-life social activities that require patience, turn-taking, and negotiation.

Parental Mediation: Between Physical Supervision and Parental Resignation

Research findings indicate that parental guidance in Sungai Tandipah Village is largely passive mediation. Parents are often in the same room as their children, but they do not always engage in dialogue about the content they watch. Some parents feel they are supervising their children because they are at home and within their sight. However, in practice, children continue to choose their own

content, follow YouTube recommendations, and watch without explanations about acceptable and unacceptable behavior.

Table 4. Forms of Parental Mediation in Children's YouTube Use

Forms	Characteristics	Patterns Observed among Informants
Passive mediation	Parents are present but do not actively engage in dialogue or choose content.	Dominant in Type A and Type B families.
Restrictive mediation	Parents set limits on the time and circumstances in which gadgets are used.	More pronounced in Type C families.
Co-use	Parents watch with their children but do not always provide critical explanations.	Occurs occasionally, especially when parents are free.
Active mediation	Parents choose content, engage in dialogue, explain video content, and relate it to everyday behavior.	Limited and inconsistent.
Gadgets as negotiation	Gadgets are given to children to encourage them to eat, be quiet, stop crying, or not bother their parents.	Highly pronounced in Type B families.

(Based on the results of interviews and observations in Sungai Tandipah Village)

Table 4 shows that active mentoring has not yet become the primary pattern. Passive mediation is more dominant because parents understand mentoring as physical presence, not dialogical engagement. Meanwhile, Type C families indicated that time limits and family rules can change gadget usage patterns to be more manageable.

Gadgets as a Negotiation Tool in Parenting

In Type B families, gadgets are often used as a negotiation tool. Children are given YouTube to eat, stop crying, or stop bothering their mother while she is taking care of a younger sibling. In some situations, children become accustomed to associating certain activities with gadgets, such as watching YouTube while eating. This habit makes gadgets no longer just entertainment, but a requirement for children to follow the family routine.

A typical pattern begins when a child becomes fussy, refuses to eat, or interrupts the parent. In response, the parent provides a gadget, which often calms the child and encourages compliance with the parent's expectations. As this strategy appears to be effective, parents are more likely to repeat it in similar situations. Over time, the child learns to associate gadget use with calming down, eating, or gaining parental attention, leading to an increasing situational dependence on gadgets. This cycle demonstrates that using gadgets as a parenting negotiation tool offers a practical short-term solution for parents but may contribute to the development of long-term behavioral habits in children. As the pattern is repeatedly reinforced, children may become increasingly reliant on screens to regulate their emotions, participate in mealtimes, or respond to parental requests, making it more difficult for them to engage in these activities without the presence of a gadget.

Children's Social Interaction: The Language of YouTube, Limited Mother Tongue Proficiency, and Egocentrism

The most prominent finding regarding children's social interaction was the shift in their language use. Children in Sungai Tandipah Village grow up in families where Banjar is the primary language of daily communication. However, exposure to YouTube has led some children to use colloquial Indonesian expressions more frequently, including words such as “*aku*/I” “*kamu*/you”, “*enggak*/no/not”, and “*pinter*/smart”. These linguistic influences are reflected not only in vocabulary but also in the children's intonation and speaking style, which increasingly resemble those of digital media content.

This finding suggests that YouTube functions not only as a source of visual entertainment but also as an important source of language acquisition. The issue is not that children are using Indonesian *per se*; rather, the concern is that language acquired from digital content may gradually distance them from the local language spoken within their families and communities. In the context of Sungai Tandipah Village, this is particularly significant because the Banjar language represents an important element of family intimacy, cultural identity, and community belonging.

Table 5. Children's Responses When Gadget Use Is Stopped

Child Responses	Behavioral Types	Situational Tendency
Crying	The child cries when the video stops.	Occurs when the child is focused on watching.
Bargaining	The child asks for more time or chooses another video.	Occurs when parents take away gadgets.
Anger	The child refuses, screams, or displays an upset expression.	Occurs when rules are inconsistent.
Tantrum	The child throws tantrums or is difficult to distract.	More common in children who use gadgets as a means of eating/quiet time.
Can be redirected	The child accepts when invited to play or do other activities.	More common in Type C families.

(Based on the results of interviews and observations in Sungai Tandipah Village)

Table 5 shows the variation in children's emotional responses when their parents stop gadget use. These responses are not uniform but are influenced by parental mediation practices, the consistency of family rules, and children's established patterns of gadget use. Children who are accustomed to using gadgets as a means of self-soothing tend to exhibit stronger emotional reactions than those who have been introduced from an early stage to clear limits on screen time and alternative forms of play. Children's responses when gadget use is stopped demonstrate that emotional regulation is closely shaped by everyday family practices. Children who are regularly given a gadget whenever they become fussy, refuse to eat, or seek attention often find it more difficult to calm themselves without a screen. In contrast, children who are consistently guided with clear rules, predictable routines, and alternative activities are more easily redirected from gadgets to other forms of engagement. These findings suggest that children's reactions are not merely a consequence of gadget exposure itself but are also shaped by the ways in which gadgets are integrated into daily parenting practices. When gadgets are repeatedly used as a tool to manage children's behavior or emotions, children may gradually associate screens with comfort, attention, and emotional security. As a result, the removal of a gadget can trigger frustration, resistance, or tantrums because the child has not yet developed alternative strategies for emotional regulation. Conversely, families that establish consistent screen-time rules, encourage interactive play, and maintain regular parent-child communication help

children develop greater emotional flexibility. In these families, children are more likely to accept the end of gadget use and transition to other activities without significant emotional distress. This finding highlights that the quality of parental mediation, rather than gadget use alone, plays a crucial role in shaping children's emotional regulation and adaptive behavior.

Table 6. Changes in Children's Play Patterns

Play Patterns	Previous Conditions	Observed Conditions
Playing Basin	Children are actively engaged, taking turns, and following the rules of the game.	Starting to decrease as children become more interested in watching gadgets.
Playing Marbles	Children negotiate, wait their turn, and interact directly.	No longer a dominant activity for some children.
Chasing	Children are active motorically and socially.	Decreasing as children choose to sit and watch.
Hanging Out with Friends	Children play cooperatively.	Children gather but watch the screen together.
Bermain imajinatif	Children use objects around them as a medium for playing.	Reduced because children more often follow scenarios from videos.

(Based on the results of interviews and observations in Sungai Tandipah Village)

Table 6 shows that the main change is not just in the type of play, but in the quality of social interactions. Traditional play provides space for children to move, talk, negotiate, share, and learn social rules. When these activities shift to watching a screen together, children lose some of the opportunity to practice social skills directly.

Table 7. Qualitative Findings Intensity Matrix Based on Family Type

Findings	Type A	Type B	Type C
YouTube access from morning	High	High	Low
Gadget use without active supervision	High	Medium-high	Low
Gadgets as a negotiation tool	Medium	High	Low
Consistent screen time rules	Low	Low	high
Children choose their own content	High	High	Medium
Children have tantrums when gadgets are stopped	Medium-high	High	Low
Children play traditional games	Low-medium	Medium	High
Active parental guidance	Low	Low-medium	High

(Based on the author's analysis of observation and interview data)

This matrix shows that Type A and Type B families are at higher risk for heavy YouTube use and lack of supervision. However, the two families exhibit different patterns. Type A families are affected by parental absence due to work, while Type B families are affected by the use of gadgets as a household aid. Type C families demonstrate that screen time rules and active supervision can maintain a balance between children's digital and social activities.

Gadgets as “Kawan Parak”: Parenting Dynamics, YouTube Use, and Social Interaction in Early Childhood

The findings of this study indicate that YouTube and digital media use among children aged 4-6 in Sungai Tandipah Village cannot be understood as solely individual behavior. This phenomenon is part of family parenting practices shaped by busy parents, limited digital literacy, the availability of smartphones, the need to keep children calm, and changes in children’s play culture. Gadgets serve as companions, close friends who accompany children in the morning, during meals, when mothers finish household chores, and even when children need comforting.

The findings on gadgets as companions show that YouTube has become part of the family’s parenting routine. In Type A families, gadgets are provided because both fathers and mothers work full-time, often leaving children without direct supervision. In Type B families, gadgets are used as a domestic aid to encourage children to eat, calm fussiness, or disturb the mother. In Type C families, gadgets are still used, but within clearer boundaries. These findings align with Noor et.al. (2020), who showed that working mothers provide children with YouTube access for entertainment, learning, and to calm fussiness. The difference, however, is that in the context of Sungai Tandipah Village, YouTube use occurs not only in families with mothers who work formally, but also in families of farmers, small traders, daily laborers, and housewives with high domestic workloads.

The concept of *kawan parak* is important because it illustrates the emotional and functional closeness between children and gadgets. Gadgets are not just entertainment tools, but also meal companions, waiting companions, companions when mothers are busy, and even soothing devices when children cry. In the context of early childhood education, this situation demonstrates a shift in children’s sources of stimulation, from direct family interaction and social play to visual-digital experiences controlled by platforms and algorithms (Hidayat et al., 2026; Setyatmoko et al., 2024). The second finding indicates that parental guidance in Sungai Tandipah Village is predominantly passive mediation. Parents are often in the same room as their children, but they don’t always choose content, explain video content, set durations, or engage in dialogue about acceptable and unacceptable behavior. In many cases, supervision is interpreted as “the child is still visible” or “the child is still inside”. This finding highlights a gap between physical supervision and active guidance. Parental guidance ideally includes selecting appropriate content, monitoring, establishing consistent rules, and creatively using digital media with children (Coyne et al., 2017). Smartphone supervision needs to be carried out through activities such as accompanying children, watching together, diverting children to outdoor games, implementing screen time, filtering content, blocking inappropriate content, and monitoring viewing history (Astuti, 2023). Compared to the findings in Sungai Tandipah Village, most parental guidance practices have not yet reached this level. Parents tend to be physically present but have not fully carried out their functions of curation, control, and dialogue.

Passive mediation in Sungai Tandipah Village arises from three factors. First, parents lack sufficient digital literacy to understand how YouTube recommendations work, the risks of content, and the importance of post-screening dialogue. Second, parents face work and domestic pressures that make gadgets a quick solution. Third, parents perceive physical risks outside the home, such as rivers or highways, as more real than digital risks inside. As a result, children perceive safety at home, even though they are still digitally exposed to content not always chosen by their parents. Research findings indicate that in Type B families, gadgets are often used as a negotiation tool. Children are given YouTube to eat, stop crying, not bother their mother, or be quiet while their mother takes care of a younger sibling. This strategy is effective in the short term because it calms the child and allows parents to complete their work. However, it also forms a learning pattern: children learn that gadgets

are a requirement for eating, being quiet, or receiving attention. This pattern can be called situational screen dependency.

YouTube can be beneficial when used in a targeted manner, with educational content, controlled duration, and parental guidance. Targeted use of YouTube with educational content can improve vocabulary, language comprehension, and communication skills in early childhood. However, this study shows that these benefits do not automatically occur (Astuti et al., 2025; Imaniah et al., 2020; Novia Maulana et al., 2025). In the context of Sungai Tandipah Village, the problem arises not because children are exposed to YouTube, but because YouTube is often used as a substitute for interaction, a tool for negotiation, and a repeated calming tool without active guidance.

One of the key findings of this study is the emergence of YouTube language and mother tongue stuttering. Children in Sungai Tandipah Village grew up in Banjar-speaking families, but exposure to YouTube led some to use popular Indonesian more frequently, with vocabulary such as “*aku/I*” “*kamu/you*”, “*enggak/no/not*”, and “*pinter/smart*”. Children also imitated the intonation, expressions, and speaking style of the characters in the videos. This finding expands the study of Priyoambodo & Suminar (2021), because the issue of language is not only related to how fast or slow a child speaks, but also concerns which language is dominant in the child’s communication.

The YouTube language phenomenon cannot always be called language decline, as children do acquire new vocabulary from digital content. However, problems arise when digital language distances children from the local language used in the family. When children are slow to respond to grandparents, or neighbors who use a strong Banjarese dialect, a communication gap arises between generations. From an early childhood education perspective, language functions not only as a means of conveying messages but also as a medium for emotional attachment, cultural identity, and social participation. Research findings also indicate that some children exhibit negative responses when gadgets are stopped, such as crying, anger, bargaining, screaming, or tantrums. These responses are most apparent in children who habitually use gadgets for long periods or who use YouTube as a requirement for meals and as a means of calming down. These findings align with Mimin (2022), who concluded that dominant gadget use can negatively impact various aspects of early childhood development, including language and socio-emotional factors. However, findings from Type C families suggest that tantrum responses are not irreversible. Children who are accustomed to screen time rules, are given explanations before gadgets are stopped, and have alternative play options are more receptive to the change in activity.

Another important finding is the shift in children’s play patterns. Traditional games like baasin, marbles, and tag are starting to decrease in intensity. Children still gather with peers, but they often gather to watch screens together. This means that children do not completely lose friends, but the quality of their interactions has changed. Nurhasanah & Yudha (2023), found that gadget use negatively impacts the social interactions of early childhood. Ruhela et al. (2025), found that internet addiction impacts children’s well-being. The findings from Sungai Tandipah Village enrich this study by demonstrating a concrete form of change in social interactions, namely from traditional active play to screen-based social activities.

Comparisons across family types show that YouTube usage patterns are not uniform. In Type A families, gadget use is high because parents work full-time. Children become digitally independent, but with minimal direct supervision. In Type B families, gadget use is high because it is used as a tool for domestic negotiation. In Type C families, children remain familiar with YouTube, but their use is more limited because parents enforce time limits and alternative playtimes. These differences suggest that the key factors are not just parental employment status, but the consistency of rules and the quality of support provided.

Theoretically, this study makes three contributions. *First*, it expands the study of digital parenting by incorporating the local context of suburban Banjar. *Second*, it proposes the concept of gadgets as *kawan parak* explaining that gadgets are not just technological devices but have become close friends, negotiation tools, temporary substitutes for parents' presence, and part of the daily parenting rhythm. *Third*, it develops the concepts of YouTube language and mother tongue stuttering to broaden discussions about screen time and language development. Practically, the results of this study demonstrate the need to shift parents' understanding of digital parenting. This guidance extends beyond sitting near children to selecting content, watching together, discussing video content, setting time limits, and redirecting children to social games. Early childhood education teachers can use these findings as a basis for parenting activities about screen time, safe content, mother tongue, and traditional games. Village governments and early childhood education cadres can also develop locally-based family digital literacy education, starting with everyday issues, such as children eating while watching YouTube, children throwing tantrums when asked for their phones, and children no longer playing with toys.

Conclusion

This study aims to understand the dynamics of YouTube use among children aged 4-6 in Sungai Tandipah Village through three main aspects: access patterns, parental guidance, and children's social interactions. The results indicate that YouTube has become part of the family's parenting routine. Gadgets no longer merely serve as entertainment but also serve as *kawan parak* close friends who accompany children in daily activities, including mealtimes, while parents are working, or when the child needs comfort. Children demonstrate good technical skills in operating YouTube independently, but they lack the skills to select content, regulate usage duration, or control themselves when gadget access is discontinued. The quality of children's digital experiences is strongly influenced by parental guidance patterns. Passive guidance tends to increase children's dependence on gadgets, while active guidance with consistent screen time rules helps children more easily transition to non-digital activities.

This study also found that YouTube use affects children's social interactions and language development. Some children frequently use popular Indonesian learned from digital content, thus beginning to distance themselves from the Banjarese language used within the family and community. Furthermore, some children showed difficulty controlling their emotions when gadgets were stopped, as well as reduced engagement in traditional games. Theoretically, this study offers two contextual concepts: gadgets as companions, YouTube language, and mother tongue stuttering, which broaden the study of digital parenting and early childhood development. Practically, these findings emphasize the importance of active digital support through content selection, limiting screen time, dialogue with children, and providing alternative activities. The results of this study also provide a basis for early childhood education teachers, village governments, and families to develop community-based digital literacy programs that continue to support children's local language use and social interaction. This study has limitations because it involved informants from a single village and did not specifically examine the influence of various types of YouTube content on child development. Therefore, further research is recommended to analyze the relationship between digital content characteristics and children's language development, emotional regulation, and social behavior in more depth.

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